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**ZAPU AND THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN
ZIMBABWE
1957-1980**

BY

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This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

02/09/03

Signed by candidate

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Abbreviations	iv
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Sources	
Chapter Two: The Birth of ZAPU, 1957-1962	33
Introduction	
From NDP to ZAPU	
ZAPU Leadership	
Chapter Three: 'Splitting Up,' 1963-1964	48
Introduction	
Grumblings within ZAPU	
The Impact of The Split	
The Significance of ZANU	
Chapter Four: ZAPU and The Battle Front, 1965-1973	83
Introduction	
The Armed Struggle	
The ZAPU-ANC Alliance	
The Joint Military Command	
ZAPU's Second Internal Crisis	
Effects of The Second Internal Crisis	
Revival of the JMC	
Reviving and re-structuring ZAPU	
The African National Council, 1972	

Chapter Five: The Decisive Phase, 1974-1980 **128**

Introduction

The African National Council (Zimbabwe)

The Zimbabwe People's Army

The Impact of ZIPA

ZIPRA Military Engagements from 1975

'The Turning Point'

Nkomo's Talks with Smith

The Patriotic Front

Chapter Six: Conclusion **174**

Bibliography: **185**

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Abstract

The Unity Accord signed by PF (ZAPU) and ZANU (PF) in 1987 saw the emergence of a 'new' party called ZANU PF. ZAPU was 'swallowed' up by a party which was formed by people who broke away from ZAPU in 1963. ZAPU's failure to win a majority in the first democratic elections and its subsequent 'disappearance' in 1987 have an impact on the manner in which ZAPU's participation in the liberation struggle is presented by some people. This study traces ZAPU's contribution to the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe by taking a look at the history of the party from the time it was formed in 1961 until the attainment of independence in 1980.

Official documents from ZAPU are not easy to come by. Post-independence tension and fighting between cadres from ZAPU and ZANU resulted in the confiscation, by the government, of ZAPU war records and other documents in 1982. These documents have not yet been returned and most likely will not be returned since the party does not exist anymore.

Interviews with founding members of ZAPU and some ordinary cadres who participated in the struggle shed a light on the nature of ZAPU's participation in the struggle for independence. Significant figures in ZAPU like James Chikerema, the man who was in charge of ZAPU's first armed cadres, Dumiso Dabengwa, a member of ZAPU's first armed group and subsequently ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, and Welshman Mabhena, a founding member of ZAPU who remained within the country during the struggle, are among the active members of ZAPU who were interviewed for this study. Professor Ngwabi Bhebe, Professor Phenias Makurane, and Mr. Pathisa

Nyathi bring in perspectives of people who had direct dealings with the party without being directly involved as cadres.

This question one asks when discussing ZAPU's contribution to the liberation struggle is: what did ZAPU do? Joshua Nkomo, the leader of the party from its birth to its 'death' put together an account of his experiences as a nationalist leader in Zimbabwe in The Story of My Life, a book which was published in 1984, while Nkomo was in exile, having run away from the ZANU led government which he argued wanted to kill him and annihilate his party. The Story of My Life makes an invaluable contribution to this study, just as some bits and pieces written by Nkomo when he was in detention. Nkomo, as leader of the party, played a huge part in mapping out ZAPU's strategy. This study argues that the lack of consistence by Nkomo contributed to ZAPU's failure to employ its full potential on the battlefield. Nkomo was essentially a man of peace who preferred a negotiated settlement rather than the attainment of independence through the barrel of the gun. As such, in 1975, Nkomo went into secret talks with Ian Smith.

Ultimately the independence of Zimbabwe was negotiated at Lancaster House in 1979. ZAPU and ZANU presented their opinions at Lancaster House as a united body, the Patriotic Front. However, the two parties had committed hugely unequal numbers of manpower to the battlefield. The bulk of ZAPU's army had not yet been deployed by the time the war ended. In terms of numbers then, ZANU had more cadres fighting in Rhodesia than ZAPU. Though it never made use of its full military potential, ZAPU's participation in the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe cannot be ignored.

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ABBREVIATIONS:

ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
ANC	African National Council (Rhodesia)
ANC(Z)	African National Council (Zimbabwe)
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
CYL	City Youth League
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertacao de Mozambique
FROLIZI	Front For the Liberation of Zimbabwe
JMC	Joint Military Command
NDP	National Democratic Party
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PF	Patriotic Front
RF	Rhodesian Front
SIDA	Swedish Development Agency
SRANC	Southern Rhodesia African National Council
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN	United Nations
UNIP	United National Independence Party
ZANLA	Zimbabwe National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZIPA	Zimbabwe People's Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

Chapter One

Introduction:

The history of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe,¹ as taught in the educational institutions within the country, has to a large extent been told from the 'victor's' perspective. The role played by the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) (ZANU (PF)) in the liberation of Zimbabwe has been highlighted to such an extent that one gets the impression that ZANU (PF) was the only nationalist party that actually took the Rhodesian government head on in the struggle. The rhetoric at independence was tailor-made to suggest that ZANU (PF) had played the decisive role in the struggle. It has been argued that the war started with the Sinoia battle in 1966, where ZANU (PF) cadres were involved.² The impression created by portraying ZANU as the first among nationalist parties to launch the armed struggle was aimed at glorifying ZANU's contribution to the struggle and possibly seeking to legitimize the ZANU government.³

This study seeks to highlight the contribution of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) to the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. It is argued that even though ZANU (PF) played the most significant role in the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe, one should not overlook the contribution that was made by ZAPU. It is unfortunate that most accounts on the history of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle have not yet given a near definitive history. The constant problem has been the tendency to

¹ The name adopted at independence in 1980. The country was previously known as Southern Rhodesia. When Smith declared UDI in 1965, Rhodesia became the official name. In discussions prior to independence, this study will refer to the country by the name relevant to the period under discussion.

² David Martin and Phyllis Johnson *The Struggle for Zimbabwe* (London: Faber & Faber,) 1981, p. 9.

³ Interview with Professor Ngwabi Bhebe, Oral Historian and writer, Gweru, 15/1/03.

present biased accounts.⁴ Even though there has been a change of rhetoric in the post Unity Accord period,⁵ with official statements acknowledging the contribution of ZAPU in the liberation struggle, a book like The Struggle for Zimbabwe, by David Martin and Phyllis Johnson, which is often presented as the classical record of the liberation war, tells the story from a ZANU perspective. The rhetoric of the post Unity Accord period has not changed what has been written in such books and what has already been taught. Recognition of ZAPU's contribution to the struggle lags behind that of ZANU.

It is necessary to admit that the levels of commitment to the armed struggle between ZANU and ZAPU were different. ZAPU adopted the armed struggle as a way to maintain pressure on the Rhodesian government while they sought negotiations.⁶ Nkomo's attempt to settle for a secret deal with Ian Smith in 1975⁷ can be used to argue that while ZANU had to be forced to attend the Lancaster House talks, because of the party's radical commitment to achieving liberation through the armed struggle, the level of ZAPU's commitment to the war was not as intense as ZANU's. Like the African National Congress (ANC) with which it was linked, ZAPU regarded the armed struggle as a way to bring the minority regime to the negotiating table. The moderate nature of Nkomo's approach is seen through some of the decisions he made. When Nkomo became commander in chief of the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), he

⁴ Dumiso Dabengwa 'ZIPRA in the Zimbabwe War of National Liberation,' in Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence Ranger (eds.) Soldiers in Zimbabwe Liberation War (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications,) 1995, p. 24.

⁵ In December 1987, ZAPU and ZANU signed a Unity Accord that ended post independence hostilities between the two parties and also saw the amalgamation of the two parties to form a united party called ZANU PF.

⁶ Interview with Mr. James Chikerema, Founding member of ZAPU, Harare, 28/04/03.

⁷ This deal is discussed in detail in chapter five.

appointed his own commanders, getting rid of those he regarded as radicals.⁸ This suggests that Nkomo was not committed to a full-scale armed struggle. When he realized that there were radical commanders, keen to launch an intense armed struggle, he got rid of them.

When one considers the nature of 'The Turning Point'⁹, ZAPU's grand military plan, which in fact was never realized because of the settlement at Lancaster House, one may conclude that ZAPU did not participate significantly in the armed struggle. However, a closer look at ZAPU activities during the struggle will reveal that in its own way, ZAPU played a key role in the liberation struggle. One calls to mind the Wankie battles, the Sipolilo battles, the ZIPRA attacks on the Victoria Falls airport and attacks on the Elephant Hills Hotel in Victoria Falls, as evidence of ZIPRA's active involvement in the struggle. Attacking the fuel reservoirs in Salisbury (Harare,) was a clear sign that ZAPU guerrillas were courageous enough to move into the capital city and launch a significant act of sabotage, taking the war into the backyard of the Rhodesian regime as it were. The shooting down of the Rhodesian Airways Viscounts in Kariba reflected the complexity of ZAPU's military equipment. These ZAPU campaigns cannot be overlooked when one discusses the liberation of Zimbabwe.¹⁰ The presence of ZAPU in the south-western region of Rhodesia and the northern region stretched the manpower of the Rhodesian security forces, especially after the Botswana front had been established.¹¹ If indeed ZAPU had not made a significant contribution to the struggle, Rhodesian

⁸ 'Nkomo's Secret Deal with Smith' Document at National Archives, Harare, GEN-P/NKO, Acc. 38917 p. 1.

⁹ Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) 'The Turning Point', 3rd April 1979. Ref Number RCD/1/79, National Archives, Harare, GEN-P/NKO, Acc. 39835.

¹⁰ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo, 18/01/03.

¹¹ *ibid.*

security forces would not have been stretched in their attempt to deal with the threat of nationalists. If only ZANU cadres infiltrated, Rhodesian forces could have gathered their defense along the border with Mozambique where ZANU cadres were infiltrating from, especially after 1975.

Perhaps the most outstanding contribution ZAPU made to the liberation struggle is the fact that it brought together most of the nationalist leaders who were eventually to lead the independent state of Zimbabwe. Their careers in politics took shape within ZAPU.¹² By highlighting the plight of the African people in Rhodesia, the existence of ZAPU radicalized the quest for independence. With the founding of ZAPU, the desire for an independent Zimbabwe gained momentum as reflected by the direct reference to the name Africans regarded as the acceptable name of the country.¹³ Those who formed ZANU in 1963 had all been members of ZAPU. The split, leading to the formation of ZANU, may be regarded as a formative development in the liberation struggle. In what ZAPU may not have done, resulting in dissatisfaction that led to the formation of ZANU, there were lessons learnt and things to be avoided in the future.

The various players in the liberation struggle made direct and indirect contributions. Direct contributions were those activities the players engaged in with the intention of achieving particular goals. The formation of the African National Council (ANC), as a front for opposing the Pearce Commission, is an example of a direct contribution. Since the main African nationalist parties were banned and most of their leaders were in detention, it became necessary to create a front for African opposition, making use of some of the African nationalist leaders who were not in detention.

¹² Interview with Mrs. Mary Ndlovu, member of ZAPU, Bulawayo, 10/04/03.

¹³ Wellington Nyangoni African Nationalism in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) (Washington DC: University Press of America,) 1977, p. 50.

Consequently, the ANC was formed in 1971 and it achieved its goal as the African population clearly rejected the proposals of the Pearce Commission. A radicalized African population made its demands loud and clear for “one man, one vote.”¹⁴

Indirect contributions refer to outcomes that players in the struggle may not have envisioned. The Rhodesian government was convinced that banning nationalist parties and arresting the leaders would paralyze African opposition and keep Africans in a subservient position. Unfortunately for the Rhodesians, arrests and bannings only served to radicalize African opposition to the government, an indirect contribution by the Rhodesians to the struggle. Nkomo and ZAPU made some significant indirect contributions to the struggle as well in areas which ZAPU has not taken credit because initial outcomes appeared to be failures. Nkomo’s attempt to reach a settlement with Ian Smith in 1975 is among the indirect contributions. As the talks collapsed, ZAPU intensified its recruitment for the armed struggle.¹⁵

ZAPU experienced devastating splits during the struggle, splits which cost ZAPU membership and credibility in some respects. The first major shake up was the split in 1963, which resulted in the formation of ZANU. In 1963, ZAPU lost leaders and ordinary members after the leadership of Nkomo and ZAPU policies were questioned. By focusing on the issues that led to the split, one catches a glimpse of what may have been happening within ZAPU at the time. It has been argued in some circles that the 1963 split marked the beginning of the deterioration of ZAPU from being a national party

¹⁴ ANC ‘Why ANC Says ‘NO’ To The Settlement Proposals’ Statement to The Pearce Commission in Salisbury, 3 January 1972, in W. Nyangoni and G. Nyandoro (eds.) Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents (London: Rex Collings,) 1979, pp. 210-211.

¹⁵ Chapter Five has a detailed discussion of these talks and their impact.

to eventually becoming a party with a regional following, only able to attract supporters mainly from the Matebeleland and Midlands regions.

In the period between 1970 and 1972, ZAPU experienced another internal crisis. James R. D. Chikerema, who had led the external wing of the party in his capacity as vice-president of the party, left ZAPU to form the Front For The Liberation of Zimbabwe (FROLIZI) following irreconcilable differences between him and Jason Z. Moyo, the party's Treasurer. The internal crisis of the 1970s paralyzed ZAPU's war efforts and cost ZAPU essential contacts with the Frente De Libertacao De Mozambique (FRELIMO,) the liberation movement in Mozambique. FRELIMO had approached ZAPU and the South African ANC for assistance in opening up the Tete front in Mozambique.¹⁶ The 1970s split came just before the finalization of arrangements for the cooperation between ZAPU and FRELIMO. The internal crisis forced ZAPU to withdraw from talks with FRELIMO. Pressed by the war in Mozambique, FRELIMO turned to ZANU, an arrangement that eventually saw ZANU making use of bases within Mozambique after FRELIMO came to power. Had it not been for ZAPU's internal crisis, the links with FRELIMO, which ZANU established, would have been ZAPU's.¹⁷ The impact of the Chikerema split on ZAPU's war will be discussed.

ZIPRA was established after the Chikerema crisis. ZAPU came up with a re-organized military wing in exile, indicating an increasing commitment to the armed struggle. Time will be spent probing the organizational structures of ZIPRA, the manner of training cadres and the actual engagement of ZIPRA cadres in battle. Recruitment programmes and recruitment areas will also be analyzed. ZAPU's significant

¹⁶ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Director of ZAPU's Publicity Department, Bulawayo.

¹⁷ Interview with Mr. Amos Ngwenya, Founding member of ZAPU, Bulawayo, 08/04/03.

contribution to the liberation of Zimbabwe will be highlighted by exposing entries from a diary of a ZIPRA combatant, showing the effectiveness of the war against white colonists.¹⁸

Despite the split in 1963 that saw ZAPU and ZANU parting ways, the reality of fighting a common enemy resulted in bouts of collaboration between the two parties. Deconstructing the view that ZANU alone liberated Zimbabwe makes it necessary to show that ZANU and ZAPU collaborated in negotiations with the Rhodesian government and in the actual fighting; hence, the discussion below on the Joint Military Command (JMC) and the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA). The Patriotic Front (PF) was created in 1976, so that ZAPU and ZANU could collaborate in their talks with the Rhodesian government. At Lancaster House, Nkomo played the important role of ensuring that the talks succeeded. The radical Mugabe kept on threatening to walk out of the talks but the moderate Nkomo made sure that the Patriotic Front remained present at the Lancaster talks.¹⁹ What others may have regarded as Nkomo's weakness, his moderate approach, was in fact an essential contribution in the final negotiations that brought independence to Zimbabwe.

The conclusion will summarize the significance of ZAPU's contribution to the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. Drawing on the various ways in which ZAPU participated in the liberation struggle, this study concludes by arguing that the 'victor's' perspective mode, in which the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe has to a large extent been presented, should be challenged. One cannot overlook the significant contribution ZAPU made to the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. The fact that ZAPU did not

¹⁸ Harold P. Ndlovu *ZIPRA Combat Diary*, (London Branch: ANC Zimbabwe,) May – December 1976, National Archives, Harare, GEN-P/AFR, Acc. 38904.

¹⁹ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Director of ZAPU's Publicity Department, Bulawayo.

become the first government of the independent state of Zimbabwe should not be used as the only means for judging ZAPU's commitment to the struggle. A presentation of the history of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, which acknowledges the reality of ZAPU's contribution, is essential.

This study discusses the contribution of ZAPU as a party, but also focuses on the activities of some individuals in the party. Nkomo, as leader of the party, played a key role in guiding the party through the liberation struggle. While working on behalf of the party, Nkomo took responsibility for the manner in which the party's policies unfolded. James Chikerema, as vice president of the party and leader of the exiled wing of the party from 1964 to the early 1970s, also played a key role in shaping out the policies of the party. Time will thus be spent highlighting the activities of some individuals through whom the policies of ZAPU were seen in action.

ZAPU had a very short legal life. In August 1963, the People's Caretaker Council (PCC) was formed, after ZAPU had been banned and just after ZANU had been formed. Within Rhodesia, ZAPU would not legally exist until shortly before the 1980 elections, when the ban was lifted. In 1976, Nkomo formed the African National Council (Zimbabwe) (ANC (Z)). Is it realistic then for one to discuss the contribution of ZAPU to the liberation struggle from the 1960s until 1980 when ZAPU was banned in 1962? Just as the African nationalist parties that had been banned and re-born under different names yet essentially the same from 1957, once formed, ZAPU existed throughout the liberation struggle, though under various names at times. What became the PCC and ANC (Z) were essentially ZAPU emerging under different names. Reference made to ZAPU in

this study respects the fact that during the struggle for independence, the party also appeared as the PCC and the ANC (Z).

Sources:

The fact that the general history of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe has to a large extent been presented from the 'victor's' perspective has resulted in a great collection of written materials with a bias in favour of ZANU (PF). The post independence struggle between ZANU and ZAPU saw the confiscation of ZAPU war records and records of ZAPU's history by the ZANU led government from the party's archives in 1982. The absence of these documents made it difficult to access official ZAPU documents on the party's history. There is nowhere where one can read through a major collection of ZAPU documents. In spite of the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987, the documents that were confiscated from ZAPU have not yet been returned.²⁰ Such a situation makes it difficult to access genuine ZAPU documents which give accounts of ZAPU's history and ZAPU's contribution to the armed struggle. One acknowledges the work being done by the Mafela Trust today in attempting to reconstruct the history of ZAPU,²¹ but the task is not easy. They too mourn the absence of documented material. There are, however, several secondary and primary sources that make reference to aspects of ZAPU's history and ZAPU activities during the liberation struggle.

²⁰ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

²¹ The Mafela Trust is a group of ZAPU ex-combatants and historians in Bulawayo. Mafela Trust was set up just after independence as a way of re-integrating ZAPU ex-combatants into civil society.

Secondary Sources:

Jocelyn Alexander, Joann McGregor and Terence Ranger, in Violence and Memory, One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matebeleland²² present a detailed account of experiences of violence in the Matebeleland region. This book is an essential source for this study because the authors present accounts from ordinary people like Julia Kimeta Sibanda who remembers the violence of the early 1960s as a ZAPU activist. Sibanda was among the ZAPU activists who made petrol bombs to destroy schools and damage institutions that were linked to the government.²³ This book also exposes the problem of accessing primary sources when studying the liberation war in Zimbabwe. The rule limiting access to national archival sources for a period of thirty years since the occurrence of an event means that documented data on the liberation war is perhaps not easily available.²⁴ The book is of special relevance because it covers the period that this study focuses on, dealing especially with areas where ZAPU and ZIPRA cadres operated in.

Martin Meredith's The Past is Another Country: Rhodesia U.D.I To Zimbabwe²⁵, gives an interesting account of the struggle for independence in Rhodesia. Meredith highlights the concerns of the Africans at the beginning of organized mass movement in Rhodesia. His book is an interesting source as one traces the beginnings of the involvement of individuals like James Chikerema, George Nyandoro, and Nkomo, people who played key roles in organizing the liberation struggle. The formation of the City Youth League in 1955 is taken by Meredith to mark the beginning of organized African

²² (Oxford: James Currey,) 2000.

²³ *ibid.* p. 87.

²⁴ *ibid.* p. 113.

²⁵ (London: Pan Books,) 1980.

nationalism.²⁶ One catches a glimpse of Nkomo's strategy as Meredith points out that it seems Nkomo believed that the party's action within Rhodesia would not achieve anything significant.²⁷ Meredith offers a view on issues that may have contributed to the split in 1963. Reading through Meredith's book, one does not doubt that ZAPU participated actively in the struggle for independence. The massive ZIPRA recruitments from August 1976 and Nkomo's desire for the success of the Lancaster House Conference are highlighted.²⁸ Given the loss of ZAPU's official documents and accounts of ZAPU's war at the hands of the government in 1982, Meredith contributes significantly in presenting aspects of the history of ZAPU in the context of the liberation struggle.

Andre Astrow's Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?²⁹ gives an overview of the struggle for independence, going back to the time of the beginning of the struggle until the post independence period. Astrow explains ZAPU's failure to collaborate with FRELIMO as a reflection of ZAPU's unwillingness to commit itself fully to the armed struggle.³⁰ While there is reason to question the level of ZAPU's commitment to the armed struggle, the leadership crisis of the early 1970s played a key role in ZAPU's loss of contact with FRELIMO. Astrow also makes the specific point that ZAPU was not keen to fight in 1976 while Nkomo was engaged in secret talks with Smith.³¹ One gets the impression that secret as the talks were supposed to be, ZAPU as a party was aware of what was happening. The title of the book however reflects a

²⁶ Martin Meredith The Past is Another Country: Rhodesia UDI to Zimbabwe, (London: Pan Books,) 1980, p. 25.

²⁷ *ibid.* p. 33.

²⁸ *ibid.* pp. 304 & 377.

²⁹ (London: Zed Press), 1983.

³⁰ *ibid.* p. 42.

³¹ *ibid.* p. 98.

continuous theme in the book. Unlike Meredith whose theme is the way in which Rhodesia transformed to an independent Zimbabwe, Astrow is keen to show how African nationalists betrayed the revolution. When writing about the Lancaster House Conference, Astrow highlights the fact that the conference was a success for Britain because of the compromises that the nationalists made. ZAPU is on the whole presented as not being much committed to the armed struggle. Astrow's obsession with the compromises made by nationalists makes his book an interesting source for the purposes of this research because it presents a critical analysis of the nationalists in Rhodesia, thereby revealing some of their shortcomings.

Ngwabi Bhebe presents a very well researched perspective of the participation of ZAPU and ZANU guerrillas in The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe³². Bhebe is one of the historians in Zimbabwe who acknowledges the contribution of ZAPU in the liberation struggle. He focused his study on areas where ZAPU cadres were active during the struggle. His book is of special interest because of the scholarly account he gives and because he talks about ZAPU's actual participation in the war. Unlike those who have tried to downplay the role played by ZAPU in the struggle, Bhebe discusses the progression of ZAPU's involvement in the struggle, comparing it at times to ZANU's war efforts. Reference is made to semi-liberated areas within Rhodesia, areas where ZIPRA forces had gained military superiority. Green zones were areas that ZAPU controlled.³³ Implied in Bhebe's presentation is the fact that ZAPU actually had the upper hand in the struggle in some areas. Even though Bhebe talks about ZANU's war efforts as well, his reference to

³² (Gweru: Mambo Press,) 1999.

³³ *ibid.* p. 109.

ZAPU activities makes his book an interesting source to this research project. By the time Bhebe's book was published in 1999, there was a more conducive environment for talking about ZAPU's contribution to the struggle. Writing in the post-Unity Accord period, Bhebe was not limited by the constraints of trying to present an account of the war that glorified the contribution of the 'victor' only.

Bhebe and Terence Ranger present an outstanding study of the liberation struggle in Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War³⁴, which they edited together. Ranger and Bhebe are respectable scholars who have both done wide research in the history of Zimbabwe. One gets to hear voices from various players in the struggle. Dumiso Dabengwa, a key player in ZAPU's war writes on 'ZIPRA in the Zimbabwe War of National Liberation.' Given the fact that there are limited sources on the part played by ZAPU in the liberation struggle, Dabengwa's article makes an invaluable contribution to this study. Through this article, one encounters the thoughts and reflections of an active participant in ZAPU's war. Dabengwa begins by acknowledging that most accounts on the history of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle have not yet given a near definitive history because of the problem of bias.³⁵ By acknowledging the bias that some previous writers have submitted to, Dabengwa creates the impression that he is going to present an objective account of the war. He makes an important point with respect to the beginnings of the armed struggle. Whereas partisan accounts have tended to claim that the armed struggle started with the Sinoia battle in 1966 in which ZANU cadres were involved, Dabengwa points out that the armed struggle actually started in 1965 when ZAPU

³⁴ (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications) 1995.

³⁵ *ibid.* p. 24.

infiltrated small units into the country.³⁶ The advantage implicit in getting a first hand account from a key player in ZAPU's war can also be a disadvantage. Given that ZAPU had generally not been given a chance to present its official version of the struggle, there is a possibility of bias from Dabengwa. His article was written in the post-Unity Accord period. The tone might have been different had the article been written prior to the signing of the Unity Accord. After 1987, ZAPU ceased to exist as a party. Dabengwa and many other former ZAPU leaders joined ZANU at the signing of the Unity Accord. Inevitably, Dabengwa may have taken the newly established relationship between the two parties into consideration in his presentation.

There is a scholarly account of the dynamics surrounding the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA) by David Moore in the same book. In his article 'The Zimbabwe People's Army: Strategic Innovation or More of The Same?' Moore traces the underlying forces within ZIPA. Writing as an outsider, since he was not a ZIPRA cadre, Moore does not face the challenge of a direct participant who may invoke personal feelings and thus cloud the required objective presentation. The fact that there were tensions within ZIPA makes it necessary to read an account presented by an outsider. Participants would have been keen to justify the actions and policies of the party they belonged to.

Any doubt about ZAPU's involvement in the struggle is dispelled by Jeremy Brickhill's 'Daring to Storm the Heavens: The Military Strategy of ZAPU 1976-1979,' also to be found in Bhebe and Ranger's book. The most detailed account of ZAPU's participation in the war easily available, Brickhill's account takes us through the development of ZAPU's military strategy to 1979. He brings out ZAPU's reason for not flooding guerrillas into the country. Brickhill points out that there was a presence of

³⁶ *ibid.* p. 27.

ZAPU guerrillas in ZIPRA operational areas and mentions some of the problems ZIPRA cadres faced, problems that made it difficult for them to hold on to the liberated zones they were establishing.³⁷ Brickhill also spends time explaining how ZAPU's 'Turning Point' was distorted by Rhodesian intelligence services to suggest that ZAPU was planning to seize power from ZANU after independence. This was designed to increase animosity between ZANU and ZAPU and so derail attempts to set up a united front by the nationalists.³⁸ Brickhill was a member of ZAPU, so his article presents the voice of an active participant.

In African Nationalism in Zimbabwe,³⁹ Wellington Nyangoni gives an overview of the development of African nationalism in Zimbabwe. He acknowledges that the significance of ZAPU was that it became the first party for Africans to make use of the concepts of imperialism and Pan-Africanism within the liberation struggle in Rhodesia.⁴⁰ Nyangoni makes the essential observation that ZAPU played a key role in the formation of liberation ideology among African nationalists. He throws light on ZAPU's strategy in the struggle by making reference to Nkomo's justification for the non-revolutionary approach, the need to maintain economic structures, hence their adoption of a fairly moderate strategy.⁴¹

David Martin and Phyllis Johnson produced what has at times been referred to as the official account of the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe, The Struggle For Zimbabwe.⁴² They presented the struggle for independence in a manner that highlighted

³⁷ Jeremy Brickhill 'Daring to Storm the Heavens: The Military Strategy of ZAPU 1976-1979' in Ngwabi Bhebe and Terence Ranger (eds.) Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War, pp. 52-53.

³⁸ *ibid.* p. 59.

³⁹ (Washington DC: University Press of America,) 1977.

⁴⁰ *ibid.* p. 50.

⁴¹ *ibid.* p. 120.

⁴² (London: Faber & Faber,) 1981.

the contribution of ZANU while playing down the contribution of ZAPU. The Struggle For Zimbabwe makes reference to claims and counter claims surrounding the blowing up of fuel tanks in Salisbury in 1978. According to Martin and Johnson, ZANU cadres were responsible for the attack.⁴³ Dabengwa, ZIPRA's Chief of Intelligence, and Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Director of ZAPU's Publicity Department, among other people who were directly involved with ZAPU, dispute this claim. In separate interviews, Dabengwa and Ndlovu acknowledge ZIPRA cadres as the perpetrators. 'The Zimbabwe Review,' ZAPU's monthly publication reported that on 11 December 1978, ZIPRA forces blasted the fuel depot in Salisbury, destroying 45-55% of the country's oil stocks and reserves⁴⁴. Martin and Johnson's book allows us to get a view of ZAPU's contribution to the struggle from a ZANU perspective.

Chimurenga The War in Rhodesia 1965-1980⁴⁵, by Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin, gives an account of the war from a fairly neutral basis. An important contribution in highlighting the activities of guerrillas is the visual presentation that Moorcraft and McLaughlin present through their map, which is used in chapter five of this study, on guerilla infiltration routes.⁴⁶ By looking at the map, one gets a picture of the way in which cadres from ZAPU and ZANU infiltrated into Rhodesia and the borders of their war zones. In 1972, ZANLA had about three hundred trained cadres while there were about four hundred ZIPRA cadres. However, by the end of 1975, ZANLA's recruitment had resulted in very large numbers, outnumbering ZIPRA. The figures which

⁴³ David Martin and Phyllis Johnson The Struggle For Zimbabwe, (London: Faber & Faber,) 1981, p. 88.

⁴⁴ ZAPU, 'The Zimbabwe Review,' (Cuba: ZAPU Information Bureau,) October-December, 1978, volume 7, p. 4.

⁴⁵ (Marshalltown: Sygma Books,) 1982.

⁴⁶ Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin Chimurenga The war in Rhodesia 1965-1980, (Marshalltown: Sygma Books,) 1982, pp. 74-75.

Moorcraft and McLaughlin present clearly indicate that statistically, ZIPRA never committed as many cadres as ZANLA to the struggle.⁴⁷ The book stresses the difference in the levels of commitment to the armed struggle between ZAPU and ZANU.

Kees Maxey highlights some of ZIPRA's military engagements in The Fight For Zimbabwe: The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia Since UDI⁴⁸. Maxey sheds light on ZAPU's strategy around 1972 by making reference to an interview in which George Silundika revealed that ZIPRA avoids direct confrontation with the enemy, opting rather for sabotage as the main tactic, hence the widespread planting of landmines.⁴⁹ The essence of Maxey's contribution is an acknowledgement of the fact that while ZAPU avoided direct confrontation, ZAPU actively participated in a different form.

Henrick Ellert's The Rhodesian Front War, Counter Insurgency and Guerrilla Warfare 1962-1980,⁵⁰ brings out the significance of ZAPU's name. The name Zimbabwe was put in the forefront for the first time. From now on, the nationalists were committed to overcome the oppression of the minority regime so as to create a new country, Zimbabwe.⁵¹ Ellert points out that by 1977, ZIPRA cadres were operating throughout Matebeleland. A new front allowed ZIPRA cadres to cross the Zambezi River near Kanyemba and then move into Sipolilo and Magondi. By 1978, the Rhodesian army was overstretched by nationalist forces.⁵² Implied in Ellert's statement on nationalist forces is the active involvement of ZIPRA forces.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* p. 73.

⁴⁸ (London: Rex Collings,) 1985.

⁴⁹ *ibid.* p. 104.

⁵⁰ (Gweru: Mambo Press,) 1989.

⁵¹ *ibid.* p. 1.

⁵² *ibid.* p. 46.

Mordechai Tamarkin highlights Nkomo's character as a way of identifying some of the forces behind ZAPU's strategy in the struggle. In The Making of Zimbabwe,⁵³ Tamarkin argues that when Nkomo went into secret talks with Smith, he was convinced that he would attain independence by peaceful means since radicalism was not really part of his approach.⁵⁴ Tarmakin's main weakness as a source is the tendency to rely too much on Martin and Johnson's The Struggle For Zimbabwe, a book that is biased in favour of ZANU. It is however important that Tamarkin mentions that even though ZANU had waged a successful war, its efforts alone would not have brought down the internal settlement. ZAPU's contribution was thus crucial.⁵⁵

Cindy Courville's PhD thesis on 'The Zimbabwe Nationalist Movements: Strategy For Liberation' also makes an invaluable contribution to this dissertation. Tracing the strategies of ZAPU and ZANU in the struggle, one is able to pick out from Courville's thesis some of the strategies that ZAPU employed in the liberation struggle. Courville also evaluates the impact of these strategies, making the suggestion that respect for elders and loyalty to Ndebele culture made it impossible to challenge Nkomo within ZAPU.⁵⁶ One thus understands why Nkomo's policies and actions play a key role in understanding the part played by ZAPU in the struggle. Not that Nkomo was identical to ZAPU, but respect for Nkomo played a key role in the manner in which his policies helped in shaping the policies of ZAPU.

⁵³ (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd,) 1990.

⁵⁴ *ibid.* p. 87-88.

⁵⁵ *ibid.* p. 229.

⁵⁶ Cindy Courville 'The Zimbabwe Nationalist Movements: Strategy for Liberation,' (PhD Thesis: University of Denver,) 1988, p. 112.

Primary Sources:

The primary sources used in the writing of this dissertation can be divided into two groups. On the one hand, there was the use of the written word from documents found mainly at the National Archives in Harare, and use of the spoken word, gathered from interviews conducted with people who were directly involved with ZAPU during the various phases of its existence.

Nkomo put together an account of his life in The Story of My Life. This gives Nkomo's perspective of the nature of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe and the level of ZAPU's involvement. Since Nkomo was the leader of ZAPU throughout the struggle, his account becomes a key source for this research. However, one has to bear in mind some of the dynamics surrounding this invaluable book. The book was published in 1984 while Nkomo was in exile, having run away from independent Zimbabwe because of serious violent clashes between the ZANU led government and ZAPU. One cannot ignore the bias in Nkomo's book. He has no kind word for Mugabe. The government's desire to present 'victor's' accounts of the liberation struggle resulted in the banning of Nkomo's book when it was published. The ban was only lifted after the death of Nkomo and indeed, after the 'death' of ZAPU, when there was no longer a viable opposition party to present a different account of the liberation struggle.

In Crisis in Rhodesia, Nathan Shamuyarira⁵⁷ discusses the manner in which ZAPU dealt with being banned. *Madiro* party (you do what you want,) was a ZAPU innovation of responding to the ban on political meetings. People would gather for a 'funeral' for three or four days. At such gatherings, political organization went on behind

⁵⁷ (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd,) 1965.

the scenes.⁵⁸ In 1965, when Shamuyarira's book was published, he was a member of ZANU. Consequently, Shamuyarira contributes to the history of ZAPU from the perspective of an outsider, yet an active participant in the struggle.

Professor Masipula Sithole's Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle⁵⁹ traces struggles within the nationalist parties during the struggle for independence. Sithole gives a detailed account of the 1963 split that resulted in the formation of ZANU. Sithole's account of the 1963 split is of special interest because he is the brother of Ndabaningi Sithole, the man who became ZANU's first President. We benefit from inside information the brothers exchanged. He gives a detailed account of the internal crisis within ZAPU in the 1970s and the tensions within the ANC. From Sithole's analysis of the conflicts within the nationalist movements, one gets an impression of how ZAPU pulled through and contributed to the liberation of Zimbabwe. Sithole presets a critical analysis the Patriotic Front.⁶⁰

Ken Flower writes from a unique perspective in Serving Secretly: Rhodesia's CIO's Chief on Record⁶¹. In writing about his own experiences as a leading figure in the secret services of the Rhodesian government, Flower exposes the manner in which the Rhodesian government viewed the nationalist movements in the country. While those who broke away from ZAPU to form ZANU in 1963 gave their reasons, Flower's book suggests the involvement of the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) in the splitting up of ZAPU in 1963.⁶² Despite indicating that ZANU and ZAPU had different levels of

⁵⁸ Nathan Shamuyarira Crisis in Rhodesia (London: Andre Deutsch Ltd,) 1965, p. 203

⁵⁹ (Harare: Rujeko Publishers,) 1979.

⁶⁰ Masipula Sithole Zimbabwe: Struggles within The Struggle, (Harare: Rujeko Publishers,), 1979, pp. 166-168.

⁶¹ (South Africa: Galago,) 1987.

⁶² Ken Flower Serving Secretly Rhodesia's CIO Chief On Record, (South Africa: Galago,) 1987, p. 104.

commitment to the armed struggle, Flower acknowledges ZAPU's involvement in the struggle. In 1974, Flower made the observation that security forces were failing to deal with nationalist recruitment.⁶³ Since he makes reference to nationalists, not to a particular party, one is left to conclude that the recruitment was being carried out by both ZAPU and ZANU.

Ian Smith's The Great Betrayal presents an account of the war from the perspective of the leader of the minority government. Smith's account highlights the manner in which the government viewed the war and how it responded to the various diplomatic initiatives that were aimed at bringing about a negotiated settlement in Rhodesia. Smith is obsessed with proving how Rhodesians were betrayed by external powers, South Africa and Britain among them, into surrendering power to nationalists. His memoirs highlight how the independence of Zimbabwe was attained, not only because of the war.

Robert Mugabe's Our War of Liberation has a collection of his speeches, articles and interviews from 1976 to 1979. Though he discusses the progression of ZANU's efforts on the battlefield, Mugabe's speeches make a significant contribution to this study. He conveys the manner in which ZANU sought to be different from ZAPU. The levels of ZANU's commitment to the armed struggle as the only means of demanding independence and ZANU's unwillingness to engage in talks are brought out by Mugabe. Mugabe helps us learn about ZAPU from a ZANU perspective.

Wellington Nyangoni and George Nyandoro (eds.) put together a collection of documents relevant to the topic in Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents. Among these various documents are some articles that were produced by

⁶³ *ibid.* p. 126-127.

ZAPU. Considering that ZAPU original documents are not easy to come by, Nyangoni and Nyandoro make an invaluable contribution to this dissertation. Whereas various writers provide a glimpse of the character of Nkomo and the policies of ZAPU, original documents bring one in touch with the tone of players in the party. In 'The case for majority rule in Rhodesia', written by Nkomo while he was at Gonakudzingwa detention camp in 1964, Nkomo makes reference to the fact that the Africanization that ZAPU was seeking did not exclude whites. What needed to be done was opening up opportunities previously denied to Africans.⁶⁴ Nkomo's approach was moderate.

Thomas Arbuckle, in a document at the National Archives entitled, 'Rhodesian Bush War Strategies and Tactics: an Assessment,' points out that operation Tangent on the south-west part of Rhodesia, along the Botswana border, was a result of the manner in which ZIPRA had gained strength in the area.⁶⁵ Such information is evidence of ZAPU and ZIPRA's significant contribution to the liberation struggle.

ZAPU's concept of the Patriotic Front is revealed in an interview the Liberation Support Movement had with Nkomo in 1978. According to Nkomo, while ZANU was keen on establishing combined military operations while maintaining separate political organizations, ZAPU wanted military and political union.⁶⁶ One reads a difference of intentions that was bound to haunt the Patriotic Front. However, the fact that ZAPU eventually chose to uphold the Patriotic Front rather than be lured into participating in the

⁶⁴ Joshua Nkomo 'The case for majority rule in Rhodesia,' Gonakudzingwa camp, 1964, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro, (eds.) Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents, (London: Rex Collings,) 1979, p. 104.

⁶⁵ Thomas Arbuckle, 'Rhodesian Bush War Strategies and Tactics: an Assessment', National Archives: Harare, GEN-P/ARB, Acc. 34011, p. 31.

⁶⁶ Liberation Support Movement Zimbabwe: The Final Advance (Oakland: L.S.M Information Centre,) 1978, p. 35.

internal settlement must be acknowledged as an outstanding achievement.⁶⁷ The Patriotic Front became the main negotiating block for the African nationalists in the negotiations that saw Zimbabwe getting independence.

The National Archives in Harare has a number of documents from the ZAPU Information Department under the title 'Our Path to Liberation.' These papers make an invaluable contribution to this dissertation because through them, one gets to read the official writings of ZAPU. Entries from a combatant's diary indicate that ZIPRA had various fronts, including a south, southwest and western fronts; a north and northwest fronts; an eastern front and an urban terror campaign.⁶⁸ The entries on these fronts highlight the manner in which ZIPRA engaged in the struggle in various areas.

Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity sheds light on aspects of ZAPU's approach to the liberation struggle. In Zimbabwe: Some Facts About Its Liberation Struggle, Ndlovu denies the claim that Nkomo accepted the 1961 constitution. He says that the distortion surrounding the 1961 constitution was an aspect of the settler regime's attempt to destroy Nkomo.⁶⁹ Ndlovu's contribution forms part of the writings that come from people who were directly involved with the party, people whose voices were silenced in the immediate post independence rhetoric on the liberation struggle.

A party's regular publication obviously contains a lot of propaganda and some factual information about the party. ZAPU's monthly publication, 'The Zimbabwe

⁶⁷ *ibid.* Interview with Eddison Zvobgo, 'You Either Support the Patriotic Front Or You Support the Enemy,' p. 34.

⁶⁸ ZAPU Information Department 'Our Path To Liberation,' 20 November 1976, National Archives, Harare, pp. 13-19, GEN/OURP, Acc. 39857.

⁶⁹ Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Zimbabwe: Some Facts About Its Liberation Struggle, p. 22, National Archives, Harare, GEN/NDL, Acc. 42882.

Review' exposes the various ways in which ZAPU engaged in the liberation struggle. One catches an overview of some of the areas that ZAPU penetrated; a list of twenty areas is mentioned in one edition.⁷⁰ Reports of ZAPU's engagements in the struggle are presented in 'The Zimbabwe Review'. ZAPU's own evaluation of the war is presented by the edition that looks at the 'Effects of The War On Rhodesian Economy.'⁷¹

'Moto' magazine offers objective reports on the liberation struggle. Though on the whole sympathetic to the nationalist cause, the fact that 'Moto' was a publication of the Catholic Church kept the paper away from publishing partisan propaganda. 'Moto' thus offers an interesting perspective to the liberation struggle. A report on ZANU's first congress highlights how claims of being radical could be challenged. At the congress, ZANU resolved, among other things, to collect signatures to petition Britain and the United Nations to release political prisoners, and the Central Committee resolved to form a government in exile and declare African people independent, should the Rhodesian government declare Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI).⁷² To a large extent, these resolutions were a continuation of the approach ZAPU had used. One is thus left to conclude that ZAPU had in fact laid the foundation of the strategy to the struggle.

State controlled newspapers during the time of the liberation struggle did not give much attention to African nationalist movements. It was part of government policy to remain silent on the war in the beginning so that nationalist guerrillas, operating in small groups, would find it difficult to trace their impact.⁷³ The *Bantu Mirror* later known as *The Central African Daily News*, made up for the gap created by the government's

⁷⁰ ZAPU 'The Zimbabwe Review', (Cuba: ZAPU Information Bureau,) September/October 1968, Volume 1, Numbers 4 & 5. pp. 12-13. National Archives, Harare, S/ZIM, Acc. 5996.

⁷¹ 'The Zimbabwe Review,' Volume 7, May-June 1978, pp. 24-25.

⁷² Paul Chidyausiku (ed.) 'Moto' (Gwelo: Catholic Mission Press,) Volume 6, number 6, June 1964, p. 1.

⁷³ Ken Flower Serving Secretly Rhodesia's C.I.O. Chief On Record, p. 104.

silence. Detailed reports on activities of the nationalists were reported in *Bantu Mirror*, a paper whose target readership comprised mainly of the oppressed Africans in Central and Southern Rhodesia. This newspaper is an important source of information as one focuses on the formative period of organized nationalism in Zimbabwe. The paper was banned in 1964 because of its sympathy for the nationalists.

Tackling a topic that is not rich on written primary sources makes oral sources indispensable. This dissertation draws information from the personal experiences of eighteen people who were linked with ZAPU and ZIPRA in different ways during and after the struggle. These people were asked to give accounts of their experiences of the manner in which ZAPU participated in the liberation struggle. Questions on the party's aims, strategies, organizational structures, support base, and actual engagements in the armed struggle, were asked. The relationship between ZAPU and ZANU during the struggle was also looked at in the interviews, beginning from the time of the split in 1963 to the period of the attempt to set up combined military operations and the eventual setting up of the Patriotic Front. Interviews concluded with a question specifically asking for the significance of ZAPU and ZIPRA's contribution to the liberation struggle.

What follows are brief profiles of some of the individuals interviewed, highlighting their special relevance to this study:

James Chikerema was a founding member of the Southern Rhodesia National Youth League (SRNYL) in 1957, commonly referred to in publications as The City Youth League. Chikerema pointed out that reference to the City Youth League was propagated by Shamuyarira, consequently portraying it as an urban-based group. Chikerema's insistence on the name SRNYL stems from his claim that the party also had branches in

rural areas.⁷⁴ Chikerema was thus present and active from the time African nationalism in Rhodesia took an organized form. He was part of the NDP leadership and from August 1963, Chikerema was ZAPU's vice president. Based in Zambia and leading the party's external wing, Chikerema was directly responsible over ZAPU's first armed cadres in the Special Affairs Department, as they were known then. A crisis in the early 1970s saw Chikerema leaving ZAPU, having contributed to the internal crisis that saw ZAPU losing the possibility of establishing close ties with FRELIMO. Chikerema's reflections make an invaluable contribution to this dissertation.

Dumiso Dabengwa joined the NDP's Youth Wing in 1958. At the formation of ZAPU, he was elected Youth Secretary and was a member of the Special Affairs Department carrying out acts of sabotage. Dumiso remained faithful to ZAPU after the 1963 split and was among the first ZAPU cadres to be sent out of the country for training.⁷⁵ His name will always be mentioned whenever one discusses the command structure of ZIPRA. In 1971, he was appointed Secretary of ZAPU's War Council, eventually becoming ZAPU's Chief of Intelligence.⁷⁶ As a military leader within ZAPU, Dabengwa's contribution to this research is invaluable. One gets to hear about ZAPU's war from one of the people who played a leading role in coordinating the war.

Welshman Mabhena was involved with nationalist politics from the days of the NDP and was very close to Nkomo. In 1962, Mabhena was arrested and sentenced to five years in prison for carrying explosives. Upon release from prison, Mabhena remained within the country, participating in coordinating the affairs of ZAPU under the

⁷⁴ Interview with Mr. James Chikerema, Harare, ZAPU founding member.

⁷⁵ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

various names the party existed in the country.⁷⁷ One thus gets the perspective of a ZAPU leader who witnessed the struggle from within the country by listening to the experiences of Mabhena.

Amos Ngwenya first made contact with an African political movement in 1954 in Johannesburg. Back in Rhodesia, he joined the SRANC, making him a participant in African nationalist politics in Southern Rhodesia from the time of its birth. Ngwenya remained faithful to ZAPU after the 1963 split and was part of the ZAPU leadership based in Lusaka from where the beginnings of ZAPU's war were organized.⁷⁸ Ngwenya presents the view of a ZAPU leader who was directly involved in the administration of the party in exile.

Jane Ngwenya joined African nationalist politics at the formation of the SRANC, when Nkomo had not yet become prominent. She insisted that she did not join 'Nkomo's party' like other people; she met him in leadership. She had been a member of the Bulawayo African Women's Organization. When the NDP was formed, Ngwenya was one of the two women elected to the national council. She remained part of the leadership when ZAPU was formed and remained faithful to ZAPU throughout the struggle.⁷⁹ Her experience as a mother during the struggle sheds a unique perspective to history of the struggle. Accounts of the war have tended to come from men who were the majority in leadership. Ngwenya thus makes an invaluable contribution to this study.

Swazini Ndlovu joined the youth wing in 1961. The task for the youths then was to educate the African population, to make them understand issues that were fundamental to the struggle and drum up support for ZAPU. From the early 1970s, Ndlovu was

⁷⁷ Interview with Mr. Welshman Mabhena, Bulawayo, ZAPU founding member, 17/01/03.

⁷⁸ Interview with Mr. Amos Ngwenya, ZAPU Founding member, Bulawayo, 08/04/03.

⁷⁹ Interview with Mrs. Jane Ngwenya, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo, 08/04/03.

operating as an administrator in ZAPU camps in Tanzania.⁸⁰ Leaders in exile, among them, Ndlovu, carried out coordination and planning of ZAPU's war.

Enos Nkala joined nationalist politics during the time of the City Youth League, later joining the successor parties until ZAPU was formed. Nkala is of special interest to this research because ZANU was formed at his house in Highfields Township, Salisbury.⁸¹ He brings in the perspective of the group that left ZAPU in 1963 to form ZANU. What members of ZAPU may not say about the reasons behind the 1963 split, Nkala brings out. One is thus able to get the view from the other party through Nkala.

Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu presents a perspective largely informed by experience from working in ZAPU's Publicity Department. Ndlovu became the Director of Publicity of ZAPU as well as founder and chief editor of 'The Zimbabwe Review,' ZAPU's official regular publication.⁸² Ndlovu came into contact with ZAPU's propaganda through which the party communicated its involvement in the liberation struggle. Having worked in ZAPU's Publicity Department, one can see the possibility that Ndlovu's contribution will be sympathetic to ZAPU. Despite the inevitable bias, there is reason to pay attention to the contribution of a man who witnessed ZAPU's participation in the struggle.

A glimpse of the experiences of ordinary ZIPRA cadres is caught by analyzing the participation of Vincent Ndlovu and Baleni. Ndlovu joined ZAPU in 1974 without much understanding of the policies and goals of the party. Personal experience had taught him though that Africans in Rhodesia were being oppressed. He operated in the

⁸⁰ Interview with Mr. Swazini Ndlovu, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo, 10/04/03.

⁸¹ Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, ZANU founding member, Bulawayo, 09/04/03.

⁸² Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

Jambezi-Wankie-Victoria Falls area.⁸³ Baleni is one of the ZIPRA cadres with first hand experience of the attempts by ZAPU and ZANU to establish military collaboration. In 1976, Baleni arrived at Chimoio in Mozambique, leading a group of ZIPRA cadres sent to establish a united army with ZANLA.⁸⁴ Having listened to the experiences of members of ZAPU in leadership positions, a contribution from the ordinary soldiers brings in a perspective from the 'people on the ground' as it were.

Professors Phenias Makurane and Ngwabi Bhebe's interviews bring in the perspective of academics that were close to the leadership of ZAPU. Makurane gives a largely objective analysis of the struggle since he was in touch with both ZAPU and ZANU in exile.⁸⁵ Bhebe is among the historians who have studied the history of the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe. Author of ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Church and co-editor of Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War, Bhebe contributed to this study through his experiences as a writer and an oral historian. Having given time to studying both ZAPU and ZANU, one gets the impression of a balanced presentation from Bhebe.

Another interesting account of the liberation struggle is presented by Pathisa Nyathi, a man who claims not to have joined any political party during the struggle.⁸⁶ Nyathi brings the perspective of an observer, but an observer who is also a researcher in the history of the liberation struggle. Looking at the split within ZAPU, which saw the formation of ZANU, Nyathi suggests the role played by the government's secret service

⁸³ Interview with Mr. Vincent Ndlovu, ZIPRA Ex-combatant, Bulawayo, 16/01/03.

⁸⁴ Interview with Mr. Baleni, ZIPRA Ex-combatant, 08/04/03.

⁸⁵ Interview with Professor P. Makurane, Academic, Bulawayo, 09/04/03.

⁸⁶ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Bulawayo, Academic, 07/04/03.

in trying to weaken ZAPU.⁸⁷ Members of ZANU will never acknowledge that the Rhodesian regime participated in splitting up ZAPU as a way of weakening the nationalist opposition to the regime.

The experiences of Isabel Ncube and Nigel Johnson present an insight into life in ZAPU holding camps. Ncube was at Victory Camp, just outside Lusaka, together with about four thousand other young women. She discusses how young ladies coming into the camp were vetted before being exposed to training. Ncube is an interesting source because the manner of her recruitment by ZIPRA exposes the way in which ZIPRA cadres sometimes used force to recruit. She was abducted by ZIPRA cadres and forced to join the military wing. Nigel Johnson's work at Jason Moyo Camp II for young men in Solwezi, Zambia, gives the perspective of an 'outsider.' Johnson lived with members of ZAPU in the camp but never became an active member of the party. He operated in the camp as a social worker and thus was able to point out how supplies destined for the young men at J.Z Moyo Camp sometimes got diverted to feed ZIPRA cadres.

While I am grateful to all the people who granted me interviews, I must acknowledge the limitations of the interviews as a tool for gathering information. Two interviewees identified one limitation by suggesting that they would only answer questions that they were comfortable with since there is sensitive information with respect to the armed struggle. Consequently, some questions were not answered because there were deemed sensitive. This simply means that there are things that the public may not get to know about the liberation struggle since people who were directly involved are not yet comfortable to discuss them. The question to ask is; will the sensitivity of the

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

information ever vanish? The people with first hand experience will die before the sensitive information is divulged.

Most of the ZAPU members interviewed for this research are now members of ZANU PF, the ruling party. Consequently, they spoke as representatives of the party they belong to, ZANU PF. ZAPU is no longer there since it was 'swallowed up' by ZANU in 1987 with the signing of the Unity Accord. ZAPU was not given a chance to present its account of the liberation struggle just after independence and perhaps will never get a chance to present that account since the party is no longer there. While the post-Unity Accord period has seen a shift from the tendency to glorify the contribution of ZANU to the liberation struggle, it seems the desire to maintain unity will keep those former ZAPU members now in ZANU silent over issues that make founding members of ZANU uncomfortable. They will not want to be seen criticizing the party they belong to.

There was a deliberate attempt to get a panel of interviewees that was truly representative of ZAPU, but how does one ascertain that? The individuals who were interviewed for this dissertation present a window through which we can have a glimpse of ZAPU's participation in the liberation struggle. While it would have been a brilliant idea to have a number of interviewees who were not members of ZAPU, the limitations of time and space for this research did not make it possible.

How much and what does one remember and in what context? This is a question that haunted me through the interviews, especially as I was dealing with some individuals who were no longer young. The interview with Chikerema in particular, highlighted this dilemma. Without doubting the authenticity of the information supplied by Chikerema, his age played a significant role in the manner in which he was asked questions. While a

more vigorous interview might have been possible if Chikerema was ten years younger than he is today, I was forced to tone down my approach in order to accommodate Chikerema's advanced age.

The current government of Zimbabwe does not tolerate dissenting voices. As such, individuals are not comfortable to discuss topics that seem to oppose the government with strangers. In conducting these interviews, I was a stranger to most of the interviewees. This made some interviewees uncomfortable to divulge information because they were not sure how I would end up using it. The interviews were conducted at a time when there is a dislike of the current leadership in government because of a collapsing economy, triggered by the government's land reform programme. This context might have impacted on the tone of some of the interviews.

Chapter Two

The Birth of ZAPU, 1957-1962:

Introduction:

A discussion of ZAPU's contribution to the liberation struggle must begin by constructing a background of the context in which the party was born. This chapter traces the beginning of organized African nationalism in Southern Rhodesia. The emergence of ZAPU was a result of the work of the founding fathers and mothers of African nationalism in Southern Rhodesia. The manner in which ZAPU emerged as a national party and the nature of the party's structures will be examined, and so will the goals of the founding leaders of the party. The manner in which the Southern Rhodesian government responded to the emergence of organized African nationalism will also be examined. Government's tough reaction to the African nationalists helped in radicalizing their demands.

The origins of organized African nationalism in Southern Rhodesia go back to 1957. Chikerema argues that the Southern Rhodesia National Youth League (commonly referred to as the City Youth League) opened up nationalist campaigns in the country.⁸⁸ He points out that the sentiments for a national organization were borne within the National Youth League, which, according to him, was not based in Salisbury only. It also had branches in some rural areas. Chikerema, George B. Nyandoro, and other members of the Youth League made consultations across the country, meeting other smaller groups to make enquiries about the possibility of setting up a national body to represent the interests of the African people in Southern Rhodesia. These consultations culminated in the formation of the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress

⁸⁸ Interview with Mr. James Chikerema, ZAPU founding member, Harare.

(SRANC) when the African National Congress, which had been based mainly in Bulawayo, and the National Youth League, joined hands.⁸⁹ Nkomo was invited to the leadership of the party because of the seniority of his age. Chikerema, Nyandoro, and Jason Z. Moyo, were also part of the leadership of this new party.⁹⁰ Nationwide meetings held by the leadership saw the SRANC spread its wings to most rural areas. The party became very strong, setting up branches in areas that had previously not had any organized movement championing the cause of African nationalism.⁹¹

Unlike the National Youth League, which had adopted a radical strategy in registering opposition to the government, the SRANC was moderate in its approach. Its main concerns included the promotion of non-racialism, economic progress for the black population, land reform for the benefit of the many dispossessed Africans, and an improvement of the franchise to give Africans an opportunity to participate in the political administration of their country.⁹² Pressure by the SRANC to improve the franchise touched on an issue that was central to the concerns of the African population.

The emergence of an organized African nationalist body provoked a response from the government. Whereas there had never been a strong body championing the concerns of the Africans on a national level, the presence of the SRANC meant that Africans could now make their concerns loud and clear to the government, which was however not ready to improve the plight of blacks. The activities of the SRANC caused the government to harass and arrest blacks for their involvement in politics. Most leaders

⁸⁹ Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, ZANU founding member, Bulawayo.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² Martin Meredith The Past is Another Country: Rhodesia UDI to Zimbabwe p. 25.

of the SRANC were arrested in 1959, the period during which the SRANC was banned. Nkomo survived imprisonment because he was in exile when the party was banned.⁹³

The National Democratic Party (NDP) succeeded the SRANC in January 1960, basically assuming the same leadership and party structures of the SRANC. The leadership of the banned SRANC formed the NDP while they were in prison following the banning of their party. A constitution for the new party was smuggled out of prison in 1959.⁹⁴ The NDP continued with the strategy adopted earlier by the SRANC- conscientizing the African people about their oppression and demanding that the living conditions of Africans be improved. Michael Mawema and Willie Musarurwa, who had not been imprisoned, led the party while Nkomo was in exile.⁹⁵

The main aim of the NDP was to persuade the British government to curb the excesses of the Southern Rhodesian government.⁹⁶ In 1961, Nkomo, who had now assumed leadership of the party upon his return from exile, led a delegation of the NDP to a Constitutional Conference. While Rhodesians wanted to secure their hold over Southern Rhodesia constitutionally, the British wanted to give up control over Southern Rhodesia on condition that Africans were assured of advancement. Out of sixty-five seats in parliament, the 1961 constitution gave Africans fifteen seats only.⁹⁷

There are differing opinions on the position of the NDP at the conference, especially Nkomo's position as leader of the delegation. These varied opinions will be seen playing a part in the first split experienced by ZAPU in 1963. On the one hand, there are those who argue that Nkomo initially accepted the provisions of the 1961

⁹³ Interview with Mrs. Thenjiwe Lesabe, ZIPRA ex-combatant, Bulawayo, 08/04/03.

⁹⁴ Interview with Mr. James Chikerema, ZAPU founding member, Harare.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

⁹⁶ Martin Meredith, *The Past is Another Country: Rhodesia UDI to Zimbabwe*, p. 28.

⁹⁷ *ibid.* p. 34-35.

constitutional talks, only to reject them after experiencing protests within the party.⁹⁸

Astrow agrees with Meredith in suggesting that Nkomo gave in to a constitutional deal with a dual electoral roll, giving Africans fifteen seats while whites were assured of a comfortable fifty reserved seats.⁹⁹ Through the constitutional deal, Britain had followed a legal process in drawing up the constitution. Consequently, Britain was ready to give up her powers to veto discriminatory legislation. While Nkomo and the NDP delegation may have regarded the conference as a step towards majority rule, they were in fact compromising the reality of majority rule.¹⁰⁰ Leopold Takawira, at the time running the NDP office in London, condemned the agreement, calling it “‘treacherous’ to the future of the three million Africans (in Southern Rhodesia).”¹⁰¹ It was only then that Nkomo and his delegation reneged, rejected the constitutional proposals and encouraged NDP supporters to boycott the constitutional referendum.¹⁰²

Dabengwa agrees with those who acknowledge that Nkomo had in fact accepted the 1961 Constitution. He points out that Nkomo’s approach at the time had been to accept the constitutional talks with a grain of salt. However, when the whites insisted on a gradual process of empowering blacks rather than granting independence immediately, the party rejected the idea and encouraged party leaders to break off from links with the constitutional talks.¹⁰³

On the other hand, there are those who deny the fact that Nkomo ever accepted the 1961 constitutional proposals. Nkomo says that the 1961 constitutional talks yielded

⁹⁸ *ibid.* p. 32.

⁹⁹ Andre Astrow *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?* (London: Zed Press,) 1983, p. 34-35.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* p. 35.

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

no fruit because whites sought to protect their interests at the expense of the concerns of the blacks.¹⁰⁴ While Africans wanted to be allowed to vote and to have the land question addressed through the constitution, the British did not want to allow both topics discussed.¹⁰⁵ Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu maintains that it is not true that Nkomo ever accepted the proposals of the 1961 constitution. He argues that the results of negotiations leading to the 1961 constitution were imposed on the nationalists.¹⁰⁶ Ndlovu said that Nkomo's critics seem to have deliberately misrepresented Nkomo's comments in rejecting the constitution when he acknowledged that the fifteen 'B' roll seats granted to the blacks were in a way better than nothing.¹⁰⁷ Ndlovu's sentiments are confirmed by Nkomo who points out that while African representatives at the constitutional conference rejected the proposed constitution, Duncan Sandys, the chairman, announced that they had accepted it.¹⁰⁸

We may not know what actually happened at the constitutional conference, but seeds of division were sown among the nationalist leaders because of the outcome of the conference. The series of violent activities led by African nationalists, coupled with the refusal of the nationalists to participate in anything related to the new constitution, provoked a radical response from the government.¹⁰⁹ The NDP was banned in December 1961, following the realization that the consciousness of nationalist concerns had been awoken in all corners of the country by the NDP.¹¹⁰ When the NDP was banned, Nkomo was in exile, having gone out of the country to avoid a clampdown by government

¹⁰⁴ Joshua Nkomo *The Story of My Life* p. 93.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Director of ZAPU's Information and Publicity Department.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Joshua Nkomo *The Story of My Life* p. 93.

¹⁰⁹ Martin Meredith *The Past is Another Country: Rhodesia UDI to Zimbabwe*, p. 32.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, founding member of ZANU, Bulawayo.

security forces. Chikerema smuggled a letter to Nkomo when the party was banned, advising him to remain in exile, as a way of making sure that not all the nationalist leaders got arrested.¹¹¹ Nkomo's critics would later on accuse him of running away from being arrested. It will be important later on to bear in mind the circumstances under which Nkomo remained in exile after the banning of the NDP.

From NDP to ZAPU:

Ten days after the banning of the NDP, a 'new' party was formed in December 1961, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). For the first time in the struggle for independence in Southern Rhodesia, a party was formed which had a name significant to the oppressed Africans in the forefront. The Zimbabwe that Africans were seeking was reflected in the name of the 'new' party. The birth of ZAPU would see remarkable changes in the struggle for independence. There was clearly a quest for a change from Southern Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, hence the name of the party.¹¹²

This 'new' party, ZAPU, was to a large extent, a continuation of the African politics of the day in Southern Rhodesia. Just like the previous African nationalist parties that had been formed and banned since 1957, the concerns of ZAPU were initially not radically different from those of the previous parties. At birth, the abolition of racial discrimination was a central concern for the ZAPU leadership.¹¹³ Experience had proved that while clear racial lines had been drawn up, the regime would occasionally treat Africans on the basis of merit, giving privileges and opportunities to a few educated nurses and teachers, while the majority uneducated Africans were left to suffer. In

¹¹¹ Interview with Mr. James Chikerema, ZAPU founding member, Harare.

¹¹² Wellington Nyangoni *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe*, p. 50.

¹¹³ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Director of ZAPU's Information and Publicity Department, Bulawayo.

demanding for one man one vote, ZAPU leaders were challenging this selective treatment of Africans by the white minority.¹¹⁴

Whereas African nationalists in Southern Rhodesia before the formation of ZAPU had generally sought an improvement of the living and conditions for Africans, the emergence of ZAPU added a new tone to the demands of the Africans. With the formation of ZAPU, one began to hear clear demands suggesting that Africans wanted to rule themselves.¹¹⁵ Taking advantage of the concerns of the people as the leadership knew them, and looking at the experiences of fellow African people in Ghana and Nigeria, the idea of having a large African party that would engage in demonstrations, strikes, boycotts and civil disobedience, as a way of achieving independence, was attractive to the leadership.¹¹⁶

'Mwana wevhu' (son/daughter of the soil) was the manner in which members of ZAPU addressed each other.¹¹⁷ Regardless of being Ndebele or Shona, or any other tribe in Southern Rhodesia, by joining ZAPU, one joined a national party championing the interests of all the black people in Southern Rhodesia. Rural areas were actively involved in the affairs of ZAPU.¹¹⁸ All this was in line with the intentions of the leaders to form a party that represented all the oppressed people in the country. The beginnings of African nationalism in Southern Rhodesia had been largely urban based. The leaders who got together were living in urban areas, but they were aware that the success of their project required the support of the majority of the African people, especially those who were in rural areas, where the majority of the African population was based. Consequently, with

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Professor Ngwabi Bhebe, Oral Historian and writer, Gweru.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Mr. Welshman Mabheba, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

the formation of ZAPU, nationalist leaders spread their influence to rural areas, conscientizing the rural community about its rights and firing them up to oppose the government.¹¹⁹

ZAPU's significance at its formation was that it became the first party for Africans in Rhodesia to make use of the concepts of imperialism and Pan-Africanism within the liberation struggle.¹²⁰ From then on, the struggle for the liberation of the African people in Southern Rhodesia was presented and spoken of in terms that resonated with the general struggle for independence which various oppressed peoples were taking up. As such, the Africans in Southern Rhodesia identified with and drew inspiration from other countries that had just got their independence. Africans in Southern Rhodesia also identified with the oppressed masses in Mozambique and South Africa, sharing in a common struggle against imperialist forces.

At the formation of the party, various people expressed objectives and aims of ZAPU in different ways. To a large extent, ZAPU succeeded the NDP in manpower, supporters and goals. The question of a universal franchise was prominent among the goals. Each person had to have the right to vote regardless of race or educational qualification.¹²¹ Such a universal franchise, it was hoped, would encourage democracy and promote liberty and foster unity in the country.

ZAPU should be allowed to take credit for including among its goals and objectives, the internationalization of the Southern Rhodesian crisis. Seeking to speak the language of the United Nations in the promotion of human rights, ZAPU put the struggle of the oppressed African people in Southern Rhodesia on an international

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

¹²⁰ Wellington W. Nyangoni *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)*, p. 50.

¹²¹ *ibid.*

scene.¹²² The Rhodesians and the British realized that the internationalization of the Rhodesian crisis gave the liberation movement an opportunity to cooperate with other anti-colonial forces in the world. ZAPU's anti-colonial and anti-imperialist sentiments made her a voice that spoke the language of liberation that many African nationalists were speaking at the time.

Speaking during the formative period of the party, Nkomo spelt out five basic aims of ZAPU. These were:

- 1/ the immediate fight against imperialism while cooperating with international organizations supporting the struggle.
- 2/ the setting up of a democratic state that granted one man one vote.
- 3/ fostering Pan-Africanism and contact with other African nationalist movements.
- 4/ the elimination of economic exploitation of blacks in Southern Rhodesia.
- 5/ fostering values of African culture.¹²³

The idea of the liberation by making use of resources beyond the borders of Southern Rhodesia was embraced by ZAPU from the time of its formation. The policy makers in the party did not regard the struggle for the liberation of Southern Rhodesia as an isolated case. It had to be adopted in the wider spectrum of the struggle against imperialist forces.

ZAPU Leadership:

The nature of ZAPU at its formation as a party representing the concerns of the African people in Southern Rhodesia can be seen through the representative manner of the initial leadership of the party. The idea of forming ZAPU was mooted in the house of

¹²² *ibid.*

¹²³ *Bantu Mirror*, December 23, 1961, Volume 26, number 40, (Bulawayo: Bantu Mirror Ltd.) p. 2.

Herbert Chitepo, a Shona speaker.¹²⁴ The national executive at the formation of the party comprised the following members:

Mr. Joshua Nkomo,	President
Mr. Samuel Parirenyatwa	Vice-President
Mr. Leopold Takawira	National Secretary, Pan African Affairs
Mr. Morton Malianga	General Secretary
Mr. Jason Z. Moyo	National Treasurer
Mr. Aggrippah Mukahlera	National deputy secretary
Mr. C. Muchachi	Organizing Secretary
Mr. Robert Mugabe	Information and Publicity
Mr. Joseph Msika	Secretary for youth
Mrs. Jane Ngwenya	Secretary for Women Affairs
Mr. Ndabaningi Sithole	National Chairman
Mr. George Nyandoro	National Financial Secretary
Mr. James D. Chikerema	National Secretary for Public Affairs ¹²⁵

The significance of the ethnic mixture of the first ZAPU national executive is highlighted by a commentary in the *Bantu Mirror* on the importance of Parirenyatwa's acceptance of the Vice Presidency of ZAPU. With Nkomo, a Kalanga, though generally grouped with the Ndebele, as President, it was observed that the acceptance by Parirenyatwa of the post of Vice President had to be read as a reflection that ZAPU was

¹²⁴ Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, ZANU founding member, Bulawayo.

¹²⁵ 'Nyandoro and Chikerema on ZAPU Executive' in *Bantu Mirror*, December 23, 1961, Volume 26, Number 40, (Bulawayo: Bulawayo Bantu Mirror Ltd.) p. 1.

certainly a national party, not a tribal grouping as some critics were keen to point out.¹²⁶ Identifying roughly the ethnic groups of the members of the national executive, one sees the following picture: Shona speakers included Parirenyatwa, Malianga, Muchachi, Mugabe, Nyandoro and Chikerema. Ndebele speakers included Nkomo, Moyo, Mukahlera, Msika, and Ngwenya. Sithole, the National Chairman, belonged to the Ndaу speaking community from the eastern highlands. One thus sees within the ZAPU executive a collection of leaders who were representative of the general African population in the country. These leaders made the concerns and intentions of the party known to their own people. As such, ZAPU easily took up a national character through the representativeness of the first national executive.

Party cells, the basic grassroots structures of the party, brought together a number of families in the same residential area. As a number of cells were put together, party branches were formed. Districts comprised several branches in close proximity. Putting together several districts reasonably close to each other, the party's provincial structures took shape. From these provincial structures, the national committee was formed.¹²⁷ ZAPU aimed at strengthening the party's existence at grassroots level so that should the party be banned, it could effectively defy the ban by operating underground. This decision was based on the experience gained after the banning of the NDP. Another reason for the desire to set up strong structures at grassroots levels was because the ZAPU leadership was beginning to prepare for the armed struggle.¹²⁸ Solid structures at cell level would be an essential resource in supporting guerrillas. It must be remembered

¹²⁶ 'The Move by Parirenyatwa' in *Bantu Mirror* January 6, 1962, volume 20, number 42, p. 6.

¹²⁷ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Director of ZAPU's Information and Publicity Department, Bulawayo.

¹²⁸ *ibid.*

that even though ZAPU might have set up new cells and branches as the party's membership grew, at the time of its formation, ZAPU essentially took over structures and the leadership of the NDP.¹²⁹

ZAPU's initial strategy for liberation did not differ much from the strategy that had been followed by the NDP. The use of constitutional means in carrying out the revolution saw petitions being sent to the United Nations and to other independent African countries.¹³⁰ From December 1961, there was an increase of violence aimed at whites. In the middle of 1962, ZAPU began training militants,¹³¹ indicating a new trend in the struggle for independence. Besides the constitutional means, which had been characteristic of the nationalists' struggle in Southern Rhodesia, within ZAPU one finds the roots of the armed struggle. ZAPU youths took up defiance of the regime seriously. Their idea was to begin sabotaging the government to make it collapse.¹³² Dynamites were being smuggled from places like Mashava mine and used to blast electric pylons. The senior leadership in the party was aware of a separate department within the party under Chikerema, the Special Affairs Department.¹³³ The question of strategy caused tensions within the party. Some argued that the constitutional campaign had failed and thus saw the necessity of full-scale armed struggle; Nkomo was not in favour of adopting full-scale armed struggle.¹³⁴

African nationalists in ZAPU had believed that there would be a British military intervention sympathetic to their cause. Britain had suggested the possibility of such an

¹²⁹ Interview with Mr. Amos Ngwenya, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

¹³⁰ Wellington W. Nyangoni *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)* p. 52.

¹³¹ Martin Meredith *The Past is Another Country: Rhodesia UDI to Zimbabwe*, p. 32.

¹³² Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

¹³³ *ibid.* The Special Affairs Department is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

¹³⁴ Cindy Courville *The Zimbabwe Nationalist Movements: Strategy For Liberation*, p. 101.

intervention should law and order breakdown in Southern Rhodesia.¹³⁵ The increased violence targeting whites did not result in British military intervention. Instead, rumor of the impending banning of ZAPU began to circulate. ZAPU had become too strong for the Southern Rhodesian government to deal with.¹³⁶ As the rumor of the impending ban was making the rounds, a decision was passed by the ZAPU leadership that should the party be banned, no other party would be formed. Instead, the operations of ZAPU would go underground. This would give ZAPU the chance to continue championing the cause for the liberation of the African people despite the ban.¹³⁷ On 20 September 1962, ZAPU was banned.¹³⁸ The government argued that it was necessary to ban ZAPU as a way of curbing the escalating violence that the government blamed ZAPU for.¹³⁹

By the time ZAPU was banned, about 190 000 Africans were members of the party.¹⁴⁰ In the nine months of its legal existence, ZAPU had managed to draw a significant number of African supporters. Throughout the legal and the illegal existence of ZAPU under its various names, there were two main categories of members. On the one hand, there were those who joined the party and bought membership cards. When counting members, these cardholders are the ones counted. On the other hand, there were those who became members of the party but never bought membership cards. Various reasons explain such a move. In urban areas, Africans feared to be caught by government police with party cards. There was also the possibility that poverty did not allow some Africans in rural areas to buy party cards since membership also implied the payment of a

¹³⁵ Andre Astrow *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?*, p. 36.

¹³⁶ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

¹³⁷ Interview with Mr. Swazini Ndlovu, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

¹³⁸ Martin Meredith *The Past is Another Country: Rhodesia: UDI to Zimbabwe*, p. 33.

¹³⁹ 'After ZAPU- what?' 'Africa Report' Volume 7, Number 10, November 1962, (Washington: The African-American Institute, Inc.)

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.* Volume 7, Number 9, October 1962, p. 28.

subscription fee. By the time ZAPU was banned, the party had a significant following in the country.¹⁴¹

Preparations for the armed struggle were already underway when ZAPU was banned because it had been felt within ZAPU that taking up the armed struggle was necessary in order to propagate the interests of the black population. By late 1962, Nkomo was receiving arms from Cairo.¹⁴² ZAPU leaders who were in Southern Rhodesia when ZAPU was banned were all placed into restriction for three months. Nkomo was in Lusaka, Zambia, when ZAPU was banned. Contrary to popular expectation that he would return to Southern Rhodesia and join the other members of his executive in facing the government, Nkomo did not return immediately. He argued that he only remained outside the country for a while because he wanted to make contacts to ensure that arms continued flowing.¹⁴³ It has been suggested that he did not return immediately to Southern Rhodesia when ZAPU was banned because he intended to form a government in exile, but this idea did not receive support from leaders of the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) and fellow ZAPU executive committee members.¹⁴⁴ Those who had expected Nkomo to return immediately and be arrested with the others were not happy with Nkomo's decision.

In banning ZAPU, the government was working on a plan to destroy African nationalism. Placing the leaders under restriction was aimed at paralyzing the work of the nationalists. But due to the activities of ZAPU in conscientizing the masses, many Africans came to believe that the injustices they were experiencing would disappear with

¹⁴¹ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

¹⁴² Joshua Nkomo *The Story of My Life*, p. 103.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Cindy Courville *The Zimbabwe Nationalist Movements: Strategy For Liberation*, p. 100.

the disappearance of the government that was championing these injustices.¹⁴⁵ Africans were radicalized by ZAPU, led to expect change, and to desire to struggle for the change to be realized. Never before in the history of Southern Rhodesia had the black population managed to organize itself into a national body resisting white rule. Once the ball was set rolling by ZAPU, radicalized Africans realized that it was indeed possible to put pressure on the settler government by challenging it and attacking it through acts of sabotage aimed at crippling it. As long as there was a sound leadership to invite African participation in resisting the colonial government, there would always be a huge number of Africans willing to participate. Gone were the days of passive resistance. With the banning of ZAPU the Southern Rhodesian government failed to realize the simple fact that placing the nationalist leaders in restriction and in detention would not necessarily cripple the activities of the nationalist movement. While the momentum of the wave of African nationalism might have been slowed down by the detention and arrests of the leaders, the underlying spirit of revolution remained within the hearts of the African people. The seed had been planted. It was a matter of time before it bore fruit.

¹⁴⁵ 'Is It Possible To Kill African Nationalism? If so, why not? If not, why then?' In 'The African Parade', February 1962, Volume IX, Number 4, (Salisbury: African Newspapers Ltd), p. 57.

Chapter Three

‘Splitting Up,’ 1963-1964:

Introduction:

The previous chapter discussed the birth of ZAPU, setting out the goals and aims of the party. This chapter deals with a major crisis that ZAPU experienced in 1963. This was the first of two major splits that the party went through. The second major split was experienced in the early 1970s when James Chikerema left ZAPU to form FLORIZI. The split in 1963 is of special significance in the history of the liberation struggle in Southern Rhodesia because it produced a party from among the founding members of ZAPU, people who had bound themselves in agreeing that African nationalists would form no new party after the banning of ZAPU.¹⁴⁶ Instead, taking up from the experience of their brothers and sisters in South Africa, they would all go underground and coordinate the struggle in hiding. This new party formed in 1963 formed the first independent government in Zimbabwe in 1980. Nkomo was pushing for the idea of setting up a government in exile, but there was some resistance to the idea among the ZAPU leaders.¹⁴⁷ Opposition to Nkomo’s suggestion of setting up a government in exile produced tension among the leaders.

This chapter thus focuses on the various reasons that led to the 1963 split. Several reasons have been put forward suggesting that the 1963 split was to a large extent inevitable. One comes across the argument that Nkomo was too weak as a leader, without much capacity to make quick and firm decisions. Consequently, for the sake of

¹⁴⁶ Terence Ranger ‘The African Experience In Southern Rhodesia: Some Primary Sources for 1963’ held at the National Archives, Harare, MS111/1.

¹⁴⁷ Nathan Shamuyarira Crisis In Rhodesia p. 173.

progress in the struggle, he had to be replaced.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, one encounters the interesting suggestion that ZANU was partly a creation of the Rhodesian Special Branch. Flower claims that the Special Branch infiltrated ZAPU and engineered a split as a way of weakening African opposition.¹⁴⁹ Capitalizing on tribal sentiments and loyalties, the Rhodesian Special Branch claims to have succeeded in getting most Shona speakers to leave ZAPU.¹⁵⁰ There was only one prominent Ndebele among the individuals who broke away from ZAPU, Enos Nkala. Most Ndebele speakers remained loyal to Nkomo.¹⁵¹ Chikerema also throws his weight behind the claim that ZANU was a creation of the enemy to ensure a weakened and divided African opposition.¹⁵²

Nkomo's movements will be of special interest in this chapter. Accusations based on Nkomo's personality require us to look at what Nkomo actually did in order to understand them. Hence, when Nkomo is accused of being a coward who feared going to prison, there is need to look at how Nkomo responded to the possibility of going to prison when the party was banned. Nkomo was a very shrewd politician. Though most ZAPU leaders rejected the idea of forming a government in exile, Nkomo managed to persuade them to travel to Dar-es-Salaam to form a government in exile. It was while in Dar-es-Salaam that it became very clear that a split within ZAPU was inevitable.¹⁵³ Nyandoro pointed out that Nkomo's attempt at setting up a government in exile provoked criticism

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, ZANU founding member, Bulawayo.

¹⁴⁹ Ken Flower *Serving Secretly Rhodesia's CIO Chief On Record*, p. 104.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

¹⁵² Interview with Mr. James Chikerema, ZAPU founding member, Harare.

¹⁵³ Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, ZANU founding member, Bulawayo.

from members of the ZAPU executive. Nkomo should have made prior arrangements with Prime Minister Julius Nyerere before taking the executive there.¹⁵⁴

When the split occurred, a new party, ZANU, was formed. At this stage, ZAPU was not in legal existence, having been banned in 1962. How did the banned ZAPU react to the formation of ZANU, a rival party in the struggle for independence? ZAPU sought to be the only party that got international recognition, so it re-organized itself to become the People's Caretaker Council (PCC) from 10 August 1963. While the PCC was a socially based organization,¹⁵⁵ not a registered political party, it was a way through which ZAPU sought to deal with the formation of ZANU.¹⁵⁶ This chapter will continue to make reference to ZAPU since the PCC was essentially ZAPU trying to avoid its ban by appearing under a different name. A number of violent clashes between members of ZAPU and ZANU emerged. Having the appropriate party card at a given time became necessary whenever one was moving around. To a large extent, members of ZAPU were hunting down ZANU supporters.¹⁵⁷

It is essential to highlight how the split weakened ZAPU. Some cadres whom ZAPU had invested in and sent for training defected to join the new party. This saw ZAPU losing trained personnel before the launching of the armed struggle.¹⁵⁸ Loss of trained personnel during the infancy stage of the armed struggle meant a loss of essential fighting force for ZAPU. The chapter will conclude by pointing out that the emergence of ZANU helped to radicalize ZAPU. While Nkomo showed a lack of urgency in taking

¹⁵⁴ Terence Ranger 'The African Experience In Southern Rhodesia: Some Primary Sources For 1963' Letter by George Nyandoro to Terence and Shellagh Ranger, dated 18 May 1963.

¹⁵⁵ Founding members claimed that the PCC was just a social group for Africans in Southern Rhodesia.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, ZANU founding member, Bulawayo.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Mr. Swazini Ndlovu, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

up the armed struggle before the formation of ZANU, competition for an impact within the country and for international recognition saw ZAPU laying out a clear path towards the armed struggle. This chapter also shows how ZANU, whose leaders left ZAPU because they did not approve of the idea of setting up a government in exile, proceeded to set up the party's headquarters in exile like ZAPU. This will leave us questioning some of the reasons put forward for the split by members of ZANU.

Grumblings within ZAPU:

In September 1962 when ZAPU was banned, there were grumblings within the party, mainly on the question of strategy. Facing the dynamics of politics within Southern Rhodesia, some African nationalist leaders were becoming impatient with their failure to achieve anything significant by sticking to a strategy formulated during the time of the NDP. It was argued that the constitutional means, which ZAPU was using, were no longer appropriate to the situation in Southern Rhodesia. Nkomo however was not in favor of launching a full-scale armed struggle. He believed that reasoning would prevail on the minds of the Rhodesian government leaders.¹⁵⁹ Nkomo failed to see the stubbornness of the Rhodesians, and their desire to cling to power as long as they could.

When ZAPU was banned in September 1962, the party's leadership was placed under restriction, each person in his/her rural home. Nkomo was in Lusaka at the time and instead of returning home as expected by the party's leadership and face restriction with the others, and contrary to the advise given to him by Sikota Wina, one of the leaders of Zambia's United National Independence Party (UNIP), a nationalist party, Nkomo left Zambia and headed further north to Dar-es-Salaam.¹⁶⁰ According to those

¹⁵⁹ Cindy Courville 'The Zimbabwe Nationalist Movements: Strategy for Liberation,' p. 102.

¹⁶⁰ Nathan Shamuyarira Crisis in Rhodesia, pp. 173-174.

who eventually left ZAPU to form ZANU, Nkomo tried to escape from arrest by going to Dar-es-Salaam. Word of Nkomo's escape from Lusaka demoralized many Africans in Southern Rhodesia.¹⁶¹ According to Nkomo, his immediate return to Salisbury was not possible since he had to establish contacts to ensure that arms continued flowing.¹⁶² Bearing in mind that some cadres within ZAPU were becoming uncomfortable with Nkomo's lack of eagerness to launch a full-scale armed struggle, it is interesting to note that he used the need to make arrangements for the armed struggle as the reason for not joining his fellow leaders in restriction. Explaining his failure to return to Salisbury immediately when the party was banned, Nkomo also said that after he had made plans for his return to Rhodesia following the banning of ZAPU, Joseph Msika was sent by members of the ZAPU executive in the country to inform him not to return immediately 'for reasons they knew better than I.'¹⁶³

Nkomo creates the impression that he was advised to remain outside the country longer than he intended to. But as leader of the party, why did he give in to the advice to remain outside the country if he did not know the reason for doing so? Was Nkomo trying to shift the blame for not returning to Southern Rhodesia immediately from himself? Granted that he only returned to Salisbury after Sithole had remonstrated, there is reason to believe that the party's executive had not officially sanctioned Nkomo's extended stay outside the country.¹⁶⁴ The remonstrations by Sithole, coupled with Sikota Wina's objection to Nkomo's move to Dar-es Salaam, suggest that Nkomo was forced to return to Southern Rhodesia. Left to his own initiative, Nkomo might have very well

¹⁶¹ *ibid.* p. 174.

¹⁶² Joshua Nkomo *The Story of My Life*, p. 103.

¹⁶³ Joshua Nkomo 'Statement to the National People's Conference, Salisbury,' 10 August 1963 in C. Nyangoni and G. Nyandoro (eds.) *Zimbabwe Independence Movements Select Documents*, p. 57.

¹⁶⁴ Masipula Sithole *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle*, p. 35.

remained outside the country while his brothers and sisters faced the wrath of the police in restriction. Nkomo's actions thus seem to confirm the accusation that he feared going to prison.

But, it might not have been a question of fearing prison. Bearing in mind Nkomo's conviction that the struggle for independence could never be successfully launched and coordinated within Southern Rhodesia,¹⁶⁵ probably regarded being placed in restriction or even detention, a waste of time. Having seen the harsh manner in which the Rhodesian government was willing to deal with the nationalist movement, Nkomo was not ready to make himself a sacrificial lamb. Unfortunately, at that time, Nkomo seems to have been the only one who understood his vision of setting up a base outside the country. Nkomo's vision of the struggle was not shared by those who sought to physically attack whites, the motivating force behind the criticism by those who regarded him as a weak leader who was determined to take them far away from the country where they were supposed to engage in actual fighting.¹⁶⁶

In October 1962, Nkomo returned to Rhodesia and was placed in restriction in Semukwe, a small village south of Bulawayo, towards the border with Botswana. He proposed to the other ZAPU leaders that they should form a government in exile in Dar-es-Salaam, but the idea was initially rejected.¹⁶⁷ The idea of a government in exile was not just one of Nkomo's wild dreams. Learning from the experience of Angola where nationalists had set up a government in exile in Morocco, and launched military attacks in the north of Angola using the Democratic Republic of Congo as a base, Nkomo intended to establish a base outside Rhodesia from where the struggle could be coordinated.

¹⁶⁵ Martin Meredith *The Past is Another Country Rhodesia UDI to Zimbabwe*, p. 33.

¹⁶⁶ Kees Maxey *The Fight For Zimbabwe: The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia Since UDI*, p. 5.

¹⁶⁷ Nathan Shamuyarira *Crisis in Rhodesia*, pp. 174-175.

However, the approach had not achieved any significant results in Angola, a fact that Nkomo seems not to have taken into consideration or perhaps was not aware of. Since Tanzania was the closest African state that had become independent by then, it made sense for Nkomo to want to set up base there since the nationalist government there was sympathetic to the struggle in Southern Rhodesia. Nkomo thought that the idea of a government in exile would be effective for Rhodesia.¹⁶⁸ A government in exile would have strengthened Nkomo's diplomatic campaign but the turn of events overtook him. In April 1963, Nkomo convinced ZAPU leaders that Nyerere had invited them to set up a government in exile. Amid resentment, members of the ZAPU executive went to Dar-es-Salaam with the hope of finding Nyerere sympathetic to their cause as Nkomo had told them. Much to their surprise, they discovered that Nyerere was against the move to form a government in exile.¹⁶⁹ Nyerere's opinion, which he made known to the ZAPU executive, was that in the case of Southern Rhodesia, the struggle would be coordinated better within the country.¹⁷⁰ It was clear that Nyerere had not been in favour of the idea of setting up a government in exile. Though Nyerere and Nkomo may have discussed the issue, there was obviously no prior agreement before Nkomo brought the ZAPU executive to Dar-es-Salaam. George Nyandoro would later make the comment that Nkomo's attempt at setting up a government in exile without making prior arrangements with Nyerere turned members of the ZAPU executive against him.¹⁷¹ There was every reason for the ZAPU executive to turn against Nkomo because of the embarrassment they experienced by being told by Nyerere to go back and fight it out in Southern Rhodesia.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Director of ZAPU's Publicity Department, Bulawayo.

¹⁶⁹ Nathan Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*, pp. 176-177.

¹⁷⁰ Wellington Nyangoni, *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe*, p.53.

¹⁷¹ George Nyandoro writing to Terence and Shellagh Ranger, 18 May 1963.

Mugabe and Takawira had broken their bail conditions by going to Dar-es-Salaam. If the idea of a government in exile had worked out, breaching bail conditions would not have mattered much to Takawira and Mugabe. But now that they had to go back to Southern Rhodesia, Mugabe and Takawira realized that Nkomo had left them exposed to the wrath of the police. At this point, there was a clear reason for a split.¹⁷² Nkomo could be accused of being inconsiderate to the plight of the other members of his executive by exposing Mugabe and Takawira to imprisonment for violating bail conditions. Takawira would later argue that the reason for rejecting Nkomo was because of the weakness of his leadership.¹⁷³ No good leader would move his executive to another country before doing the necessary groundwork as Nkomo did.

So, why was Nkomo keen to set up a government in exile, bearing in mind the failure of the Angolan experience? Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu sheds some light on Nkomo's understanding of the politics at the time. Nkomo expected that Southern Rhodesia would become independent as a matter of course, following the dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, whose other members, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) were going to be independent by 1964. According to Ndlovu, Nkomo would wonder loudly why the British government wanted to treat Southern Rhodesia differently from the other two members of the Federation, but would say in confidence that he was sure that Britain would never grant Southern Rhodesia independence on the basis of white minority rule.¹⁷⁴ Nkomo's idea of setting up a government in exile may have been persuaded by the hope that since independence was

¹⁷² Nathan Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*, p. 177.

¹⁷³ Leopold Takawira in Paul Chidyausiku (ed.) 'Moto', (Gwelo: Catholic Mission Press,) October 1963, Volume 5, Number 10, p. 1.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

coming with the dissolution of the Federation; the government in exile would thus just wait to come into power, as a matter of time. Implied in this approach is the lack of urgency for launching the armed struggle. Being a peace lover by nature, Nkomo had expected common sense to prevail, leading to independence without loss of life.

However, these were grave miscalculations by Nkomo.¹⁷⁵ The passion of those who saw the need for the immediate undertaking of a full-scale armed struggle as the only way forward would spring up within the ZAPU executive. There was a feeling at home and abroad that Nkomo's approach of appealing to peaceful means when nothing significant was being achieved was reason enough to consider his replacement as leader. Nyerere and Kamuzu Banda expressed such sentiments as well. Ndlovu pointed out that Banda described Nkomo as a spineless leader.¹⁷⁶ It is surprising that Nkomo tried to set up his government in exile in Tanzania, a country whose leader was advocating for a violent mass uprising in Southern Rhodesia. The government in exile would have removed nationalists from the domestic scene a situation Nyerere was not in favour of. This was another sign of Nkomo's lack of a strong vision as a leader. This lack of vision saw Nkomo playing into the hands of those who wanted the split as he invited the party's leadership to a meeting before getting Nyerere's approval.

One wonders whether or not Nkomo had an alternative plan should the idea of setting up a government in exile fail. As things turned out, the embarrassment experienced in Tanzania left a deep disgruntlement among ZAPU's leadership. Nkomo had clearly failed to 'steer the ship.' At a meeting in Dar-es-Salaam attended by seven members of the ZAPU executive, four voted to depose him as leader and replace him

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

with Sithole. Three of the executive members, because of their loyalty to Nkomo, abstained from casting their votes.¹⁷⁷ Nkomo rejected the results of the vote that deposed him, but according to ZAPU's constitution, a meeting attended by seven members of the executive constituted a quorum. Consequently, the Tanzania meeting, which removed Nkomo from the party's leadership, constituted a binding force.¹⁷⁸ Nkomo was quick to act. With his position as leader of the party under threat, he returned to Southern Rhodesia, leaving the executive financially crippled in Tanzania because he blocked their access to party funds. This meant that they could not move around easily. Meanwhile, Nkomo had the advantage of being back in Southern Rhodesia to affirm his position as leader among the party's faithful who had not yet grasped the unfolding events. Addressing a rally in Salisbury in 1963, Nkomo denounced the members of the executive who had criticized his strategy in Tanzania.¹⁷⁹ The people who had been trying to depose him were not in the country to present their side of the story, so Nkomo was able to secure his position as leader of ZAPU. Remaining within the leadership of ZAPU was important for Nkomo because of the decision the party's leadership had committed itself to that no other nationalist party would be formed after the banning of ZAPU. To further weaken the people who were opposing him, Nkomo announced the suspension of Sithole, Takawira, Mugabe and Malianga from the party's executive.¹⁸⁰

The actual sequence of events is not clear from the sources used. *The Central African Daily News* gives the impression that faced with the possibility of being deposed from the leadership of the party after a vote of no confidence had been passed against

¹⁷⁷ D.S.M Zvaka 'Nkomo will sink in the mud like Ben Khedda,' in *The Central African Daily News* Thursday 1 August 1963, p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Wellington Nyangoni, *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe*, p. 54.

¹⁸⁰ Masipula Sithole *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle*, p.38.

him, Nkomo rejected the vote and denounced the individuals who had expressed their opinions against him.¹⁸¹ Masipula Sithole and Wellington Nyangoni have a slightly different sequence; suggesting that after Nkomo had announced the suspension of his critics from the party, they (the suspended people,) voted to depose and replace him. Sequence may not be of particular significance; the essential fact to note was that Nkomo had managed to remain as leader of the party. The attempt to depose him failed partly due to Nkomo's shrewd tactic. The man who had been accused of running away from Southern Rhodesia because he was afraid of being arrested had in fact run back to Southern Rhodesia because there was political mileage to be gained by being present in Southern Rhodesia at the time. Nkomo was obviously aware that since Mugabe and Takawira had breached their bail conditions by going to Tanzania, they would not be in a hurry to come back to Southern Rhodesia, again adding to his advantaged position of having his critics outside the country. While Nkomo had been accused of lacking firmness in his decisions, the manner in which he dealt with the 'dissidents' from his party showed a deep willingness to neutralize their political influence among the Africans in the country. A final blow was to be delivered to the 'dissidents' at a conference at Cold Comfort Farm, to which Nkomo invited them to discuss the leadership problems of the party. Realizing that delegates to the conference had been hand picked by Nkomo from among his loyal supporters, the 'dissidents' refused to attend the conference.¹⁸² A dissident is generally an unwanted element. So, dissidents within ZAPU, the people who were challenging Nkomo's leadership, were unwanted elements.

¹⁸¹ *Central African Daily News* Thursday 1 August 1963, p. 4.

¹⁸² Masipula Sithole *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle*, p. 38.

The events of August 1963 marked a turning point in nationalist politics in Southern Rhodesia. The failure of the attempt to depose Nkomo as leader of ZAPU and Nkomo's suspension of those who were trying to oust him left the possibility of a split within the party inevitable.¹⁸³ Daggers were drawn on both sides in the contest for the leadership of the party but it was clear that Nkomo had managed to secure his position within ZAPU, hence his courage to summon the 'dissidents' to a conference. Though Nkomo's critics wanted to remain within the party, their suspension left them with no alternative but to launch their own party, ZANU.¹⁸⁴ Having bound themselves to an agreement not to form another party after ZAPU's ban, the failure of the attempt to depose Nkomo from ZAPU's leadership resulted in the formation of ZANU. Pre-empting Nkomo's conference at Cold Comfort Farm, which was to be held on 10 August 1963, Mugabe, Takawira, Nkala, Malianga, and Sithole, among others, on 8 August, announced the formation of a more radical African nationalist party, ZANU. The new party proclaimed a willingness to take the enemy head on and seek to physically attack the white settlers.¹⁸⁵

There has been an intensive discussion of the events surrounding Nkomo's attempt to set up a government in exile mainly because the events in Dar-es-Salaam made the split inevitable. One can argue that the failure of Nkomo's attempt to set up a government in exile became the immediate reason for the split. However, various other factors contributed to the split. It is essential to address some of these factors in order to deepen one's understanding of the struggles within ZAPU. The idea for the formation of

¹⁸³ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Andre Astrow *Zimbabwe: A Revolution Betrayed?* pp.37-38.

¹⁸⁵ Kees Maxey *The Fight For Zimbabwe: The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia Since UDI*, p. 5.

ZANU was discussed and finalized at the house of Nkala, a Ndebele speaker.¹⁸⁶ The significance of this fact will be exposed when considering the part played by tribal sentiments in the formation of ZANU. Nkomo raised the tribal question. He points out that Msika discovered that Malianga had a document which suggested that the majority tribe should take over the leadership of the party, getting rid of '*Zimundeverere*,' (derogatory description of the old Ndebele man.) Nkomo argues that he was being accused of giving preferential treatment to the Ndebele speaking members of the party, a point that he denies.¹⁸⁷ Ndlovu also attributes the split to issues of ethnicity. He points out that many of the Masvingo based Shona speaking leaders such as Henry Hamadziripi, Michael Mawema, Mhizha, and Patrick Mutumba, resented the idea of being led by a Ndebele, often referring to Nkomo as the reincarnation of Lobengula, an ancient Ndebele king who 'gave' white settlers passage into the Shona speaking regions of the country.¹⁸⁸

Ndlovu makes reference to another manifestation of tribal sentiments at the funeral service of Parirenyatwa, ZAPU's first vice president, a Shona speaker, who died on his way to Bulawayo. When the funeral procession reached Norton, about 40km from Salisbury, Shona speaking ZAPU leaders from Salisbury demanded that Takawira leads the procession from Norton, since he was the most senior leader in Salisbury who should be seen playing a leading part in his area. Nkomo had led the convoy from Bulawayo and he was not going to take a less prominent role upon arrival in Salisbury, consequently, he refused.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, ZANU founding member, Bulawayo.

¹⁸⁷ Joshua Nkomo, *The Story of My Life*, pp. 113-114.

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Director of ZAPU's Information and Publicity Department, Bulawayo.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*

The people who formed ZANU did not refer to tribalism at all. The list of reasons given by Sithole makes no mention of tribal sentiments.¹⁹⁰ Shamuyarira also pointed out that while there were several clashes between party members, tribal sentiments were never part of the tensions in 1963.¹⁹¹ If feelings of tribalism motivated the split, there was no way that ZANU leaders would admit it since the segregation associated with tribalism is condemned internationally. However, making the observation that Nkala was the only prominent Ndebele who joined ZANU as a founding leader, it has been argued by some people that the feelings of tribalism should not be left out when one discusses the reasons behind the 1963 split.¹⁹²

Perhaps ZANU's unwillingness to admit that tribal sentiments played a role in the 1963 split is linked to the claim by Flower that the Rhodesian government, through the hidden activities of the Special Branch, took advantage of the tribal sentiments within ZAPU and infiltrated the party, thereby igniting deeper tribal resentment which eventually contributed to the split.¹⁹³ Nyathi also makes reference to the role played by the Rhodesian government in splitting ZAPU. He said that the party had become too strong for the comfort of the Rhodesian government and there was no way that it was going to be allowed to continue existing, even underground. As more educated African leaders in Southern Rhodesia became more involved in politics from the 1960s, so entered the hidden hand of the Rhodesian Special Branch (which later became the C.I.O) into African politics.¹⁹⁴ Nkomo, who clashed several times with Takawira, accuses him (Takawira) of belonging to the dubious Capricorn African Society, which specialized in

¹⁹⁰ Masipula Sithole, *Zimbabwe: Struggles within The Struggle*, pp.40-41.

¹⁹¹ Nathan Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*, pp. 184-185.

¹⁹² Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

¹⁹³ Ken Flower *Serving Secretly Rhodesia's C.I.O Chief On Record*, p. 104.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi.

training educated Africans to collaborate with rich whites in running African governments.¹⁹⁵ Nyathi argues that it was through the assimilation of educated Africans who were not politically conscious that whites in the Special Branch infiltrated into ZAPU and eventually engineered a split in the party.¹⁹⁶ At the time of the split, those who remained within ZAPU were of the opinion that ZANU was being formed by the enemy as a way of weakening African opposition to the regime. Whereas the NDP and ZAPU had been parties with national identities, hence the slogan '*mwana wevhu*' (son/daughter of the soil,) ZANU was taking up a huge Shona identity, thus dividing African opposition to the settler regime along tribal lines.

From the ZANU perspective, four reasons necessitated the split. There was the need to establish an African party that was willing to confront the settlers.¹⁹⁷ ZAPU had failed to launch significant attacks on the Rhodesian regime because of Nkomo's commitment to constitutional means. Nkomo's fear of going to jail was also raised as a point against his leadership qualities. When fellow members of the executive had needed his bold leadership, Nkomo deserted them because he did not want to be arrested. Such was the case when ZAPU was banned and Nkomo had to be forced to return to Rhodesia.¹⁹⁸ The fact that Nkomo was showing signs of not tolerating criticism within ZAPU made the creation of another party necessary. The people who had expressed disappointment with Nkomo's unclear plans in Dar-es-Salaam had all been suspended from the party. To pursue their political ambitions within Southern Rhodesia, they

¹⁹⁵ Joshua Nkomo *The Story of My Life*, p. 111.

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi.

¹⁹⁷ Nathan Shamuyarira *Crisis in Rhodesia*, p. 180.

¹⁹⁸ Masipula Sithole *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle* p. 40.

formed their own party.¹⁹⁹ The lack of confidence in Nkomo's leadership expressed by other African leaders left some members of the ZAPU executive considering the necessity of replacing him.²⁰⁰ Pride and the need to assert themselves as true nationalists motivated the founding members of ZANU to go their own way, abandoning Nkomo who was beginning to lose respect among African leaders.

Nkomo argues that he was having problems relating with Nyerere because Nyerere was not in favor of the armed struggle that he was committing ZAPU to. According to Nkomo, Nyerere wanted ZAPU to adopt a peaceful strategy in the struggle for independence, a strategy he had used in Tanzania's struggle for independence.²⁰¹ This is an absurd claim by Nkomo because the fact that Nyerere was more in favor of Nkomo's critics, Takawira and Sithole, among others, people who were advocating for more direct confrontation with the settlers, shows that Nyerere was in fact in favor of the armed struggle. The sad face of bias is thus seen in Nkomo's autobiography as he tried to create the image that he was more radical than he really was.

The Impact of the Split:

The emergence of ZANU had a huge impact on the future of the liberation struggle in Southern Rhodesia. There were outcomes that contributed positively to the struggle for independence and some outcomes that were detrimental to the cause for the liberation of Africans. In 1963, there was a lot of inter-party fighting among nationalist leaders. The struggle for power and leadership among African nationalists resulted in a shift of focus from the real enemy, the oppressive regime. The split weakened opposition

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.* p. 4.

²⁰⁰ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

²⁰¹ Joshua Nkomo *The Story of My Life*, p. 118.

to the oppressive regime because African nationalists no longer had a united front.²⁰² On the other hand, faced with a rival nationalist party claiming to be radical and willing to physically attack white settlers, ZAPU had to flex its muscles and show a bold commitment to the armed struggle. The emergence of ZANU thus contributed to the radicalization of the campaign by nationalists.

This section takes a look at the impact of the 1963 split paying particular attention to the manner in which ZAPU responded to it. It could be argued that this split marked the beginning of the deterioration of ZAPU. As party supporters found themselves having to choose between the two parties, tribal and regional loyalties began to play a part in the way choices were being made. The loyalty of most Ndebele people saw them remaining faithful to Nkomo while Shona speakers rallied behind ZANU. ZAPU gradually lost its credibility as a national party as Ndebele speakers living in Matebeleland and Midlands rallied behind ZAPU, giving the party a regional identity.²⁰³ This section will close by highlighting the significance of the banning of the PCC and ZANU in 1964. For those persuaded by the argument that ZANU was a creation of the Rhodesian government, there is reason to conclude that the government was 'just putting icing on its cake' by banning the two organizations. Having managed to divide African opposition and left the Africans fighting each other, the government would intervene in 1964, out of concern for the 'well being' of Africans, and stop inter-party fighting by banning the PCC and ZANU.

Two days after the formation of ZANU, Nkomo announced the launching of the PCC, a 'caretaker' council that would promote the interests of African people. The PCC

²⁰² Interview with Mr. Welshman Mabheba, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

²⁰³ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

confirmed Nkomo's presidency of the party.²⁰⁴ Events just before the formation of ZANU had challenged the leadership of Nkomo. It was thus necessary for Nkomo and for ZAPU to establish solid leadership for the party. A nationalist party requires stable leadership for it to function well. It was perhaps with the notion of securing the position of Nkomo as leader of the party that Chikerema proposed that Nkomo be made life president of the party. The delegates gathered at Cold Comfort Farm adopted this suggestion.²⁰⁵ As long as Nkomo lived, party members expressed their willingness to be led by him. Any ambitious individuals within the party got the message loud and clear that there was no place for them in ZAPU. Granted that a life president assured the party of stable top leadership, the concept however, contradicted the democratic system that ZAPU was claiming to be fighting to establish. The party's acceptance of a life president entrenched the lack of tolerance for opposition, which Nkomo had expressed in his dealings with Takawira, Sithole, Malianga and Mugabe. Confirming Nkomo as life president of the party also meant that Nkomo would influence the strategy for the armed struggle adopted by ZAPU to a large extent. While having a president who was not radically committed to the armed struggle, there was no way that ZAPU would ever radically commit itself to the armed struggle without first changing Nkomo's approach.

The Cold Comfort Congress also re-affirmed the decision made before the banning of ZAPU, which had also been confirmed just after the banning of ZAPU, that no other political party would be formed following the banning of ZAPU.²⁰⁶ In line with this decision, the PCC did not regard itself as a political party. Operating as a socially

²⁰⁴ Joshua Nkomo, *The Story of My Life*, p. 116.

²⁰⁵ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity.

²⁰⁶ Joshua Nkomo *The Story of My Life*, p 116.

based group, the PCC was set up to continue the work of ZAPU.²⁰⁷ However, the decision not to form another party had been reached while ZAPU had a leadership wider than the leadership of the PCC that was now re-affirming the decision. From the re-affirmation, it was obvious that in ZAPU's eyes, ZANU was a sore sight that had to be dealt with. The solution was not too complicated for ZAPU. The 'dissidents' had to come back to the mother party, the people who had broken away to form ZANU had to be brought back to their senses and re-join 'the real' party.²⁰⁸

ZAPU should be credited for the creativity of coming up with the PCC just after the formation of ZANU. Considering that ZAPU was banned and thus could not openly hold meetings in August 1963, the formation of ZANU might have overshadowed completely the banned ZAPU if the latter had not done anything significant at the time of the formation of ZANU. The emergence of the PCC was thus necessitated by the birth of ZANU. ZAPU was forced to find a manner of existence in public that would not attract the wrath of the government while continuing with the political activities of the party. The PCC also provided ZAPU an opportunity to reorganize itself to meet the challenge that ZANU was posing, and the challenge that was emerging from trying to exist underground.²⁰⁹

In the past, a 'new' African nationalist party, formed after the banning of the previous one, would succeed its predecessor. This was the manner in which the NDP had been succeeded by ZAPU. At the time of the formation of ZANU, Takawira said that ZANU had been formed to replace ZAPU as an African political party since the PCC was

²⁰⁷ *ibid.* p. 117.

²⁰⁸ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa ZIPRA's chief of intelligence.

²⁰⁹ Interview with Mr. Welshman Mabhena, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

not a political party.²¹⁰ The contest for power, which had been experienced in the period before the split, continued. Between August and December 1963, there was bitter fighting between the PCC and ZANU members.²¹¹ While the PCC emerged as aggressor, hunting down all ZANU supporters, ZANU was forced to be on the defensive. At that time, the PCC had the advantage of commanding a large following of supporters who were keen to preserve their identity, so they fought running battles with ZANU supporters.²¹² The use of petrol bombs in African townships became common. Thirty-three people were injured in Mpopoma Township, Bulawayo, after a petrol bomb was thrown at a crowd. PCC gangsters were blamed for the violent attacks. ZANU insisted that it was necessary for the PCC to change significantly to make room for honorable unity with ZANU.²¹³ Chikerema, the PCC vice president, refused to sit down with ZANU to discuss the split and the violence their parties were entangled in. For Chikerema, the 'honorable' thing was for ZANU to disband and come back to ZAPU.²¹⁴

In 1964, the PCC made reference to an upcoming exercise of *kunyora mazita evanhu mubhuku rehupenyu*, (writing people's names 'in a book of life,' as a way of finding out the number of supporters and members the party had.) Given the background of violent clashes between ZANU and PCC supporters, Sithole accused Nkomo of trying to intimidate people by compiling a list of names of ZAPU supporters. Only God could compile 'a book of life,' Sithole said.²¹⁵ With a list of names of party members, it would have been easy for ZAPU to identify and attack ZANU members. Presumably if one's

²¹⁰ Paul Chidyausiku (ed.) *Moto* October 1963, Volume 5, Number 10.

²¹¹ Wellington Nyangoni *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe*, p. 55.

²¹² Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, ZANU founding member, Bulawayo.

²¹³ Paul Chidyausiku (ed.) 'Moto' November 1963, Volume 5, Number 11, p. 1.

²¹⁴ *ibid.* September 1964, volume 6, number 9, p. 1.

²¹⁵ *ibid.* March 1964, volume 6, Number 3, p. 1.

name was not in 'the book of life,' that was a sign that one's life could be terminated easily. The level of competition between the two groups had made ZAPU conclude that membership to ZAPU gave one a right to life. Possession of the appropriate party card became an essential survival tactic in African townships.²¹⁶

A vigilante group known as *Zhanda* carried out several attacks on blacks accused of supporting the government or ZANU. On February 13 1964, Ernest Veli was stabbed to death because he was a ZANU supporter. David Dodo was beaten to death in September because he had given evidence in court at a criminal trial of a member of the PCC.²¹⁷ Violence became the norm. Another example of the gruesome attacks on ZANU members was the case of Mr. B. Manda who was beaten up and set alight with petrol in his house by suspected PCC members. PCC supporters beat Anthony Kandodzinya, a member of ZANU who had just returned from detention at Hwa Hwa prison, to death.²¹⁸

There were attempts by people like Mr. Ngoma, a trade unionist from Umtali (Mutare), east of Salisbury, to reconcile ZAPU and ZANU. Ngoma organized a meeting in Umtali at which Nkomo and Chikerema would represent ZAPU while Nkala and Nyagumbo would represent ZANU and explain to the people what the dynamics were between the two parties. When the ZANU delegation arrived at the meeting, Nkomo and Chikerema walked out, with Nkomo saying 'I cannot speak on the same platform with these rats.'²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Interview with Mr. Welshman Mabhena, ZAPU founding member.

²¹⁷ Anthony R. Wilkinson 'Insurgency in Rhodesia, 1957-1973: An Account and Assessment', ADELPHI Papers, Number 100, (London: The International Institute For Strategic Studies,) p. 6.

²¹⁸ Chidyausiku (ed.) *Moto* July 1964, volume 6, number 7, p. 1.

²¹⁹ Maurice Nyagumbo *With the People* (London: Allison and Busby Ltd.,) 1980, p. 182.

ZANU found it difficult to organize any meetings because ZAPU always sent youths to disrupt the meetings. In rural areas, teachers, businessmen, and nurses, were targeted by ZAPU thugs. According to Nyagumbo, there was a systematic destruction of properties owned by ZANU members. It became necessary for ZANU leaders to be guarded by party youths. Nyagumbo's house in Highfields Township was broken into by ZAPU youths while he was sleeping. Nkomo had told the masses at the launching of the PCC that the Rhodesian government was using the founding members of ZANU. Consequently, ZAPU youths felt justified in working to destroy ZANU. Initially, the Rhodesian police did not bother to intervene, only doing so in 1964 after Nkomo was placed under restriction.²²⁰

One thus sees the PCC fighting two enemies in the immediate aftermath of the split. There was the government to fight and there was also ZANU to deal with. Inevitably, ZAPU's campaign against the government was weakened as most attention had to be diverted to the problem of ZANU. Acts of aggression by the PCC against ZANU are the only ones that have been highlighted in this section mainly because of the interest of this study to focus on ZAPU's history. Members of ZANU were not mere victims in the clashes with ZAPU. Takawira had said that ZANU had replaced ZAPU;²²¹ consequently, members of ZANU had the understanding that they were the only legitimate African nationalist party at the time. Though outnumbered, they too sought to mark their presence among the ordinary party supporters by fighting PCC supporters.

²²⁰ Ibid. pp. 182-185.

²²¹ *Moto* October 1963, volume 5, Number 10, p. 1.

Just as it became necessary to possess a ZAPU party card, it also became necessary to have a ZANU party card easily accessible.²²²

Preparations by ZAPU for the launching of the armed struggle suffered a setback because of the split. By 1962, ZAPU had begun preparing for the armed struggle. The first group of cadres was sent for training in China under the leadership of Charles Chikerema.²²³ People like Emmerson Munangagwa²²⁴ were part of the second group to be sent for training by ZAPU prior to the split.²²⁵ The 1963 split was reflected among the cadres in training and as they returned home. They split into parties, with Munangagwa being part of the ZAPU trained group that joined ZANU.²²⁶ ZAPU thus lost the expertise and the skills that the cadres who joined ZANU had acquired, a big blow to ZAPU's initial preparations for the armed struggle. The cadres who joined ZANU were attracted by the radical sounding war rhetoric that was being propagated by ZANU. Having been trained, they were keen to fight, so they joined the party that was most likely going to make it possible for them to fight.

Even though ZAPU lost 'military muscle' by losing cadres it had sent for training, ZAPU should be given credit for being the first party to actually send cadres for training. Launching the armed struggle required an initial group of trained personnel, and these were trained by ZAPU. Though the party may have lacked a deep commitment to the armed struggle, it provided the nationalist struggle with the first batch of trained cadres²²⁷. No doubt those cadres who joined ZANU, having trained in China, maintained

²²² Interview with Mr. Welshman Mabheha, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

²²³ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

²²⁴ Current Speaker of Parliament and close associate of President Mugabe.

²²⁵ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

²²⁶ *ibid.*

²²⁷ Interview with Mrs. Mary Ndlovu, member of ZAPU, Bulawayo.

contacts with their trainers in China because throughout the struggle, ZANU maintained close contact with the Chinese, getting military equipment and trainers from them. Here is another contribution ZAPU made to the future of the armed struggle in Southern Rhodesia. Even though Nkomo had been criticized for wanting to spend too much time outside Southern Rhodesia, there was no way that the resources within Southern Rhodesia alone would sustain the struggle. The cause for the liberation of Africans benefited from the external contacts established by ZAPU. This is a positive contribution to the struggle emerging from the split.

A discussion of the 1963 split should also pay attention to matters of Ndebele character in order to understand how ZAPU emerged after the split. While some views suggest that after the split, ZAPU emerged much stronger since divisive and power hungry elements removed themselves from the party,²²⁸ there is reason to believe that the split weakened the support base of ZAPU. When the split occurred, most Ndebele people felt that they could not abandon Nkomo, their leader. Respect for elders, especially people in leadership positions, which is prominent in Ndebele culture, motivated the loyalty of Ndebele people to Nkomo. Consequently, most of the Ndebele people who were on the ZAPU executive prior to the split remained faithful to the party, and with them, the various Ndebele people who supported them. Nkala was the only prominent Ndebele nationalist who joined ZANU at its formation. A largely Ndebele image of ZAPU began to emerge, even though Chikerema, a Shona speaker, was vice president. ZANU on the other hand was acquiring a largely Shona identity.

²²⁸ Interview with Mr. Welshman Mabhena, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

Terence Ranger's study of the Makoni district, east of Salisbury, revealed that religious beliefs of the peasants became an indispensable part of the war ideology.²²⁹ Nkomo was not just an ordinary leader to the Ndebele people. ZAPU nationalism and ideology came to embrace aspects of traditional Ndebele religion. In 1953, Nkomo visited the Dula shrine, which was one of the significant shrines in Ndebele traditional religion. Grey Bango, a trade union leader and William Sivako accompanied him and they asked the spirits how, as nationalist leaders they could overthrow the domination of the whites. At Dula, Nkomo heard the voice from the shrine telling him that the land would only be given back to the black people after thirty years of fighting, during which many people would die. A belief developed suggesting that the voice of Mwali had told Nkomo that he would be the first black leader of the independent nation of Zimbabwe.²³⁰ Consequently, there was a belief in Ndebele tradition that Nkomo was the divinely appointed leader.²³¹ It was only natural for Ndebele people to remain loyal to their divinely appointed leader.

It must be pointed out though that none of the African nationalists campaigned by appealing to tribal allegiances. In fact, Mrs. Jane Ngwenya, a founding member of ZAPU, denies that tribalism played a part in the 1963 split.²³² However, one cannot ignore the external manifestations as pointed out by Nyathi. Just after the split, ZAPU membership greatly outnumbered that of ZANU. Edison Zvobgo made reference to the fact that in the beginning, ZANU members were very few, with the first ZANU meeting

²²⁹ Terence Ranger Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe (London: James Currey Ltd.) 1985, p. 188.

²³⁰ Terence Ranger Voices from the Rocks (Oxford: James Currey Ltd.) 1999, pp. 216-218.

²³¹ Terence Ranger and Mark Ncube 'Religion in the Guerrilla War: The Case of Southern Matebeleland,' in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War, pp. 42-43.

²³² Interview with Mrs. Jane Ngwenya, founding member of ZAPU, Bulawayo.

attracting twenty-three people only since it was risky to be associated with ZANU.²³³ Overtime, as Ndebele speakers gradually rallied behind ZAPU while Shona speakers teamed up behind ZANU, numbers began to play a key role. Shona speakers are the majority in the country. Consequently, as more Shona speakers joined ZANU, the number of supporters gradually increased. Nyathi argues that as a way of entrenching division between the two parties, the Special Branch portrayed an image of ZANU as the radical party that was committed to the armed struggle, an image that was bound to cause more defections from ZAPU.²³⁴ The ethnic question of will be taken up again when the second major split experienced by ZAPU is discussed.

While most Ndebele people remained faithful to ZAPU, the radical rhetoric, which ZANU was propagating, attracted most of the black students at the University of Rhodesia.²³⁵ Young educated men and women who were highly influential in their home areas because of their educational levels, the young indigenous intellectuals, rallied behind ZANU, regarding it as the more progressive and practical party in the struggle for independence. These people inevitably played a key role in contributing to the popularity of ZANU within and outside the country. ZANU did not just become a party of intellectuals. As the struggle progressed, ZANU's strategy of mass mobilization made the party even more popular than ZAPU in most rural areas.

On an administrative level, ZAPU lost effective members of the Central Committee.²³⁶ The people that led the break away to form ZANU had all held key

²³³ 'The ZANU Idea' Speech by E. Žvobgo 08/08/1979, Document 28, in Goswin. Baumhogger *The Struggle For Independence Documents on The Recent Developments in Zimbabwe (1975-1980)* volume 2, p. 23.

²³⁴ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

²³⁵ *ibid.*

²³⁶ Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, ZANU founding member, Bulawayo.

positions in ZAPU. Takawira had been ZAPU's National Secretary for Pan-African Affairs, Malianga had been ZAPU's General Secretary, and Mugabe had been in charge of Information and Publicity, while Sithole had been ZAPU's National Chairman.²³⁷ All these people had the experience of involvement in politics on a national level, an experience that ZANU benefited from. These leaders had also built national and international profiles because of their participation as nationalists from the formative stages of organized nationalist politics in Southern Rhodesia. People who did not have this experience, let alone the talents of some of the leaders who formed ZANU filled in the gaps they left in ZAPU. ZANU's information and publicity department benefited a lot from Mugabe's fieriness and eloquence as a speaker.²³⁸ ZANU was always far ahead of ZAPU in publicity during the struggle.²³⁹ This is a reflection of the weakened ZAPU that emerged after the split. The PCC was forced to embrace new people into its top leadership, people who did not have the national experience that founding leaders of ZANU had. This may have resulted in concentrating more responsibility on already experienced leaders in ZAPU, Nkomo and Chikerema, whose prominence easily overshadowed others. The problem of power later caused another split in ZAPU.

At ZANU's first congress, a number of resolutions were adopted, indicating the general direction that the new party would follow. It was decided at the congress that ZANU would collect signatures for a petition to Britain and the United Nations, calling for the release of all political prisoners. It was also resolved that if the Rhodesian Front declared Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), ZANU's Central Committee would then form a government in exile and in turn declare the African people

²³⁷ *Bantu Mirror* December 23 1961, volume 26, number 40, p. 1.

²³⁸ Interview with Mr. Welshman Mabheba, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

²³⁹ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Director of ZAPU's Information and Publicity Department.

independent. ZANU called on Afro-Asian countries to withdraw from the Commonwealth if the UDI was declared and Britain failed to act against the Rhodesian government. ZANU encouraged Africans in Southern Rhodesia to reject state-sponsored community development projects. These were identified as a form of disguised apartheid since they were not affording equal opportunities to the various population groups in the country.²⁴⁰

The significance of ZANU:

One could say that there was no significant difference in the goals of the two African parties. Just as ZAPU had committed itself to the liberation of the African people, ZANU also came into the struggle calling for majority rule, seeking external support in pushing Britain and eventually setting up external bases.²⁴¹ So, what was new about ZANU? Should one accept the argument that Nkomo's attempt to set up a government in exile caused the split in ZAPU because the founding members of ZANU were against the idea of a government in exile? Or should one be persuaded by the argument that the people who formed ZANU were a group of power hungry individuals who had failed to assert themselves as leaders within ZAPU? A number of questions should be asked when one looks at the resolutions put forward by ZANU, noting how identical they were to ZAPU's approach to the struggle. It had become clear to all the nationalist leaders that given the nature of government repression within Southern Rhodesia, there was no way that the liberation struggle could be successfully organized internally. Indeed, while the struggle for independence had to be led by black Africans, ZANU was aware that given the power of the Rhodesian government, nationalists would

²⁴⁰ Chidyausiku (ed.) 'Moto' June 1964, volume 6, number 6, p. 1.

²⁴¹ Martin Meredith, *The Past is Another Country Rhodesia: UDI to Zimbabwe*, p. 40.

achieve very little if they chose to engage the government by themselves. External support had to be sought. Since these things were all being done by ZAPU, what was the idea behind the split then? There is reason to agree with Swazini Ndlovu in saying that the various forces at play during the 1963 split will never be completely understood.²⁴²

However, going back to the essence of this study, one sees how ZAPU policies informed the founding members of ZANU in formulating their own resolutions. As members of ZAPU, these nationalists participated in mapping out a strategy for the struggle. Their experience in ZAPU gave them a deeper understanding of the political problems they were facing in Southern Rhodesia. It was while participating in ZAPU that ZANU founder members identified what was missing in the struggle for independence by black people, a radical commitment to taking up arms. The rigidity of the Rhodesian government made it necessary to show the seriousness of black commitment to the struggle by taking up arms.

In not responding to the calls for more intense commitment to the armed struggle, ZAPU created a platform for those who felt that fighting, physically attacking whites was the only way forward, constitutional means having failed from the time of the NDP.²⁴³ What ZAPU was not doing, the cadres who formed ZANU sought to do. Thus, ZANU's rhetoric was war propaganda. Benefiting from getting some cadres who had already been sent for training by ZAPU, a new wave to the struggle for independence was introduced by the emergence of ZANU.

²⁴² Interview with Mr. Swazini Ndlovu, ZAPU founding member.

²⁴³ Kees Maxey The Fight For Zimbabwe: The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia Since UDI, p. 5.

According to Mugabe, ZANU advocated for the armed struggle as a way of gaining total independence so that the majority people in Southern Rhodesia could rule themselves. The idea was to completely overthrow the settler government through the barrel of the gun since constitutional talks had failed to achieve anything.²⁴⁴ The radical approach of ZANU was evident in the declaration of Ndabaningi Sithole, the founding President. Sithole said that 'we are our own liberators through direct confrontation.' ZANU sought to distinguish itself from ZAPU and from all previous African nationalist parties by insisting on action rather than seeking reform policies aimed at simply improving the conditions of blacks.²⁴⁵ ZANU understood its adoption of 'action' to be more radical than the previous strategy of reform. The founding members of ZANU made it clear that they were moving away from Nkomo's policy of seeking international diplomatic assistance as the main strategy of fighting for independence. Africans were now convinced that the bulk of the work in the struggle was to be taken up by them within Southern Rhodesia.

Aware that sitting back would be a sure way of allowing ZANU to overshadow it, once ZANU started laying serious plans for the armed struggle; ZAPU suddenly took a more pronounced interest in engaging the settler government in fighting. Though ZAPU had dragged its feet about the armed struggle, because of Nkomo's preference for a peaceful transition, ZANU's desire to engage in fighting forced ZAPU become the first Black Nationalist party in Rhodesia to launch the armed struggle.

²⁴⁴ Robert Mugabe *Our Way of Liberation, Speeches, Articles and Interviews, 1976-1979*, pp. 10-11.

²⁴⁵ ZANU 'From Confrontation to Armed Liberation Struggle,' in 'Southern Africa' The UN-OAU Conference, Oslo, 9-14 April 1973 (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of American Studies,) Volume 2, pp. 145-147.

In 1965 ZAPU launched its first military operations in the country. A small group of cadres was sent into the country for reconnaissance and training people locally. In the early skirmishes, Airman Chikwakwata and John Maduso, both ZAPU fighters, were captured and sentenced to death for trying to topple the government by force.²⁴⁶ ZANU's first battle at Sinoia in 1966, which has been presented by propagators of the 'victor's' perspective, as marking the beginning of the armed struggle,²⁴⁷ came after ZAPU had already begun the fighting. A more detailed account of ZAPU's military engagements will be discussed in the following chapter.

The struggle between ZAPU and ZANU in the aftermath of the split was also put on an international front as the two parties struggled for international recognition. International recognition was essential since sponsorship for the activities of the party, possibilities for training camps and the significance of claiming to be representing the interests of the African population required the recognition of the Organization of African Unity and other international bodies. Chikerema made appeals that ZAPU be recognized as the only legitimate liberation movement in Southern Rhodesia since the people had rejected ZANU the day it was launched.²⁴⁸ The people who rejected ZANU the day it was formed were all ZAPU members, most of whom were not very sure of what was going on at the time of the split. Chikerema was trying to cripple ZANU on a regional and international diplomatic level.

Although the two parties were later forced to collaborate during the armed struggle, tension and mistrust remained because of the 1963 split. Many innocent people

²⁴⁶ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

²⁴⁷ Robert Mugabe *Our Way of Liberation*, p. 42.

²⁴⁸ James Chikerema 'ZAPU: Political Situation in Zimbabwe' Statement to The Committee of Nine, Dar-es-Salaam, 5 June 1964, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro (eds.) *Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents*, p. 86.

were killed in the post independence period because of tension between the two parties and the 'unity' eventually established between them in 1987 was based on Chikerema's notion that ZANU should come back and join ZAPU. When the Unity Accord was signed in 1987, members of ZAPU joined ZANU. One wonders what impact the intolerance of ZAPU to opposition had on ZANU's attitude towards opposition. It could be argued that the violent clashes that resulted from ZAPU's attempt to crush ZANU served to radicalize ZANU in its struggle against settler domination and against African opposition. Chased after and hunted down by ZAPU supporters, survival and commitment to the struggle developed within the founding members of ZANU.²⁴⁹

As clashes between ZAPU and ZANU supporters increased, many Africans were arrested for the violence that broke out in townships. The government argued that the arrests were a way of controlling the clashes. Party leaders were also being arrested and harassed. On April 15 1964, Nkomo and other PCC leaders were detained at Gonakudzingwa²⁵⁰, a detention camp set up by the Rhodesian government in the southeastern corner of Southern Rhodesia, close to the Limpopo River.²⁵¹ For the next ten years, Nkomo was confined at Gonakudzingwa,²⁵² removed from the heart of the struggle, according to the expectations of the government, and yet he remained central within ZAPU as an inspiration to the many cadres who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of Zimbabwe.

The government's normal way of dealing with African opposition parties did not take long to show face again. On 26 August 1964, the PCC and ZANU were banned, as a

²⁴⁹ Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, ZANU founding member, Bulawayo.

²⁵⁰ Chidyausiku (ed.) 'Moto,' volume 6, number 5, May 1964, p. 1.

²⁵¹ R. Kent Rasmussen and Steven G. Rubert *Historical Dictionary of Zimbabwe* (2nd ed.) African Historical Dictionaries, no. 46 (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press,) 1990, p. 111.

²⁵² Martin Meredith, *The Past is Another Country*, 40.

way of dealing with the uncontrolled violence that was prevalent in African townships.²⁵³ September 1964 saw the arrest of Sithole, Mugabe, Nkala, and Takawira.²⁵⁴ These arrests were aimed at weakening campaigns by nationalists even more. By removing leadership from among the people, the government hoped that Africans in Southern Rhodesia would fall apart and find no coordinated approach of resisting oppression. By this time, the Special Branch was aware that there were preparations to launch the armed struggle. Arrests and harassments were thus also directed at disrupting preparations for the armed struggle.²⁵⁵ According to Nyagumbo, the Special Branch had very detailed knowledge on the movements and plans of the nationalists. When the Special Branch took him in in 1966, while planning to launch acts of sabotage on government institutions, the Special Branch informed him that it was aware of the plans and activities of the nationalists in Zambia and in Salisbury.²⁵⁶ The banning of the PCC and ZANU and the arrests of the leaders, saw an end of the inter-party violence that had rocked African townships.²⁵⁷

By the time ZANU and the PCC were banned, ZANU had been in existence for about a year, most of which had been spent trying to resist efforts by ZAPU to annihilate it. Numerically, ZAPU outnumbered ZANU supporters mainly because while ZANU was starting from scratch, ZAPU had had the advantage of taking over the national structures that had been set up by the NDP. To further weaken the banned ZANU, Nkomo announced that since all African political parties were now banned, nationalist politics would be continued without political parties. Nkomo said this while claiming at

²⁵³ *ibid.*

²⁵⁴ 'Moto' volume 6, number 10, October 1964, p. 1.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

²⁵⁶ Maurice Nyagumbo *With the People*, p. 192.

²⁵⁷ Martin Meredith, *The Past is Another Country Rhodesia: UDI to Zimbabwe*, p 40.

the same time that the only political party that had been banned in 1964 was ZANU, since the PCC had not been a political party. The way forward as seen by Nkomo was for all Africans in Southern Rhodesia to unite as Zimbabweans in the struggle.²⁵⁸ If all Africans had heeded to Nkomo's call, ZANU would have ceased to exist, and perhaps the agreement entered before ZAPU was banned would have seen ZAPU emerge as the only party for the African people but operating underground. The 1964 banning however put the struggle on another path. Chikerema and Chitepo, representing ZAPU and ZANU respectively, were sent to exile by their parties, from where they organized the armed struggle.²⁵⁹

Attempts by African nationalists to establish political parties within the country had been frustrated by the government. From the time of the birth of ZANU, ZAPU's contribution to the liberation struggle would be measured against ZANU's. In fact, because of ZANU's victory in the 1980 elections and the tense relationship between the two parties, the story of ZAPU's contribution to the liberation struggle would be told from the 'victor's' perspective, highlighting ZANU's role while playing down some of ZAPU's significant contributions.²⁶⁰

The idea of forming a government in exile before proper arrangements had been made offered the immediate cause for the split. Some members of the ZAPU executive were not happy with Nkomo's leadership since the time of the 1961 Constitutional Conference, but they had never found an appropriate opportunity to directly challenge him. Nkomo thus made the split inevitable by not planning well.²⁶¹ Inter-party clashes

²⁵⁸ *Moto*, October 1964, volume 6, number 10, p. 1.

²⁵⁹ Henrick Ellert *The Rhodesian Front War Counter –Insurgency and Guerrilla Warfare*, p. 3.

²⁶⁰ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

²⁶¹ Interview with Mr. Enos Nkala, ZANU founding member, Bulawayo.

witnessed after the birth of ZANU diverted the attention of African nationalists from the oppressive government. The failure by ZAPU to respond to demands for a radical approach to the struggle for independence had an immediate negative impact as time was spent on efforts to crush ZANU through violent inter-party clashes. The next chapter takes a look at the manner in which ZAPU participated in the armed struggle.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Four

ZAPU and The Battle Front, 1965- 1973:

Introduction:

The armed struggle in Rhodesia can be divided into three phases. The period from 1964-1969 marked the first phase, during which ZAPU made an outstanding contribution, while ZANU was still struggling to establish structures and external contacts. The second phase, from 1970-1974, saw ZANU doing most of the fighting. ZAPU had been crippled by an internal crisis in the beginning of 1970 and had also lost a number of its trained cadres in the first phase of the struggle. A process of re-structuring was thus underway within ZAPU. From 1975 to 1980, both ZAPU and ZANU engaged in the decisive phase of the struggle. ZAPU having re-structured, now had an established fighting wing with clear leadership structures.²⁶² As fighting intensified and international pressure continued pressing on all parties, a negotiated settlement at Lancaster House resulted in the drawing up of a constitution for Zimbabwe, followed by the adoption of a ceasefire agreement. Zimbabwe was granted independence in 1980. There was no military victory for any of the parties involved in the war but the armed struggle had become the main channel through which nationalist parties registered their opposition to the oppressive minority regime following the failure of previous constitutional means.

This chapter analyses ZAPU's participation in the armed struggle in Rhodesia. It traces the reason why ZAPU took up the armed struggle, making a significant shift from the strategy that nationalists had followed since 1957. According to Dabengwa, the claim that ZAPU did not fight because it was waiting to seize power from ZANU after

²⁶² Ngwabi Bhebe The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, p. 12.

independence should be dismissed since ZAPU actively participated in the armed struggle.²⁶³ One does not hear much about ZAPU's engagements during the first phase of the armed struggle because the Rhodesian government deliberately decided not to publish reports from the war as a way of making it difficult for nationalist guerrillas to trace their impact. Rhodesian security forces preferred to fight 'a silent war' during the first phase.²⁶⁴ Coupled with ZANU's bias in giving accounts of the final phase of the war that highlight ZANU's contribution to the struggle only, ZAPU's participation in the armed struggle has not received the acknowledgement it deserves.

An extract from a song that ZAPU cadres used to sing sheds some light on the spirit with which they joined the armed struggle. ZAPU cadres sung that, '... we are soldiers of the people. We have come from very far, from overseas countries where we were given help. Now we are here, fulfilling the wishes of the people. We will do so until the final victory.'²⁶⁵ The song tells the story of the training of ZAPU cadres, mostly outside the country, and their commitment to liberating the country. It acknowledged the assistance ZAPU was getting outside the country and identified ZAPU's war with the concerns of the oppressed masses in Rhodesia.

ZAPU suffered a second major split at the beginning of the second phase of the armed struggle. Chikerema, ZAPU's Vice President, the man who had coordinated ZAPU's war during the first phase, left the party, taking with him some cadres trained by ZAPU. During this second internal crisis, ZAPU also lost an essential contact with FRELIMO, which got snatched by ZANU. ZANU was able to open the eastern front, giving its cadres an opportunity to set up bases in Mozambique and infiltrate into

²⁶³ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

²⁶⁴ Ken Flower *Serving Secretly Rhodesia's CIO Chief*, p. 104.

²⁶⁵ Interview with a ZIPRA cadre, April 1980, AA NEWS, National Archives, Harare, Acc. MS591/4.

Rhodesia without the difficulties ZAPU was facing crossing the Zambezi River. The dense forest marking the border between Mozambique and Rhodesia made it difficult for Rhodesian security forces to guard the border. Robson Manyika, who had been negotiating with FRELIMO on ZAPU's behalf, defected to ZANU, having been frustrated by the internal crisis in ZAPU, which was crippling the party's involvement in the armed struggle. Rex Nhongo, another prominent commander in ZAPU, and a number of other cadres also defected to ZANU. A mutiny led by Walter Muthimukulu during this period further weakened the party because cadres faithful to Muthimukulu were forced to leave the party.²⁶⁶ It has been argued that after Chikerema's split, ZAPU took a more tribal identity because he left the party with most of the Shona members in exile while other Shona speaking members joined ZANU. Most of the people who remained faithful to ZAPU were Ndebele speakers.²⁶⁷

A re-structured ZAPU in exile emerged after Chikerema's split, with Jason. Z Moyo as the prominent leader. A more radical commitment to the armed struggle was experienced as the party set up a highly trained fighting wing, the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). A Revolutionary Council was established to take direct charge of the army, as a way of avoiding giving one individual sole responsibility over the military wing.²⁶⁸

This chapter takes a look at the revival of the ANC in 1972, but this time called the African National Council, since the African National Congress had been banned in 1959. The reason behind the revival of the ANC lay in the need to mobilize African opposition to Anglo-Rhodesian proposals to constitutional changes. The banning of

²⁶⁶ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

²⁶⁷ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

²⁶⁸ *ibid.*

nationalist parties and the arrest of leaders had to a large extent killed political activity among Africans within Rhodesia. ZAPU and ZANU had both set up bases in exile for the coordination of military activities, while party structures within the country went underground. Setting aside allegiance to parties, the ANC brought together Africans in Rhodesia to give a resounding 'NO' to the Pearce Commission. Abel Muzorewa was appointed to lead the ANC because he was considered as a neutral character that commanded a national following because of his role as a religious leader. Muzorewa was also considered an ideal candidate to lead the ANC by the nationalists because the Rhodesian government did not consider him a threat because of previous participation in nationalist politics. The manner in which African nationalists responded to the Pearce Commission highlights one way in which African nationalists successfully collaborated in forging a united front. With a united voice, they objected to the Anglo-Rhodesian proposals. Perhaps equally important is the fact that the revival of the ANC was a domestic initiative. Faced with the coming of the Pearce Commission, African nationalists had to find a quick way of mobilizing their supporters. Abandonment of partisan identities proved to be the right way.

The Armed Struggle:

After the Rhodesian government declared Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, through which Smith declared Rhodesia independent from the United Kingdom,²⁶⁹ ZAPU nationalist leaders believed that the British government would intervene with military force to prevent the declaration. Britain had indicated the possibility of military intervention should law and order break down. But when the Rhodesian government declared independence in 1965, the British government did not

²⁶⁹ Ian Smith The Great Betrayal, pp. 103-105.

intervene.²⁷⁰ ZAPU nationalists were left hoping for a breakdown of law and order in Rhodesia that would provoke the British to intervene. African nationalists believed that the British would come to their aid to halt the excesses of the Rhodesian government.²⁷¹ The initial idea behind the armed struggle was thus aimed at creating chaos within the country through various violent acts of sabotage. This chaos, it was hoped, would create sufficient reason for British intervention. The chaos that was created by the series of violent acts of sabotage during the beginning of the armed struggle did not achieve the intended goal.²⁷²

According to Chikerema, ZAPU initially engaged in the armed struggle as a way of bringing Rhodesians to the negotiating table by instilling fear in them through acts of sabotage. Dabengwa also acknowledged that the initial military training of ZAPU cadres sought to give strength to acts of sabotage.²⁷³ The birth of ZANU was a reflection of the tensions nationalist leaders were experiencing with respect to strategy. The mass politicization of the Africans that Nkomo had sought, learning from the experiences of Ghana and Malawi, had failed to achieve anything in Rhodesia. It was thus necessary to change the strategy. By 1964, ZAPU had begun training cadres for the armed struggle.²⁷⁴

Taking up the armed struggle was part of the struggle against white domination. It was not acceptable to Africans that in a country of about four million people, only eighty to ninety thousand people comprised the electorate. Most of the voters were whites, with Africans comprising less than five percent of the electorate, yet they were

²⁷⁰ Andre Astrow *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost its Way?*, p. 36.

²⁷¹ Kees Maxey *The Fight For Zimbabwe: The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia Since UDI*, p. 5.

²⁷² Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

²⁷³ Ngwabi Bhebe *The ZAPU & ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, p. 13.

²⁷⁴ Interview with Professor Ngwabi Bhebe, Oral Historian and writer, Gweru.

the majority in the country. Since the white community was determined to safeguard this privilege, Africans had to show, in very bold ways, their willingness to challenge this form of oppression.²⁷⁵ The armed struggle was part of the radicalization of the African political leaders, as they saw that their demands were not being realized. For them to remain relevant to the cause for the liberation of Africans, they had to find a more violent method to register their demands. However, within ZAPU, the armed struggle was going to be used as one of several means to achieve independence. Labour strikes, boycotts and talks would still be continued.²⁷⁶

Nkomo put James Chikerema in touch with various people he had established contact with in the Soviet Union, China, Egypt and Cuba. Chikerema's trips to the Soviet Union and China helped him make contact with groups that were willing to help people in the colonies who were fighting for independence. On the advice of Nkomo, Chikerema remained in exile in Dar-es-Salaam while coordinating the training of ZAPU cadres.²⁷⁷ When ZAPU started active preparations for the armed struggle by sending people out for training, the origins of an external wing of the party began to be established. This external wing played a key role in the struggle since the party was banned within Rhodesia. Even after the release of the political leaders in 1974, the ban on ZAPU remained. There was no way that the armed struggle could be organized within Rhodesia.

Dabengwa was part of the first ZAPU youth group that began sabotaging the government in an attempt to destroy it. A Special Affairs Department under the

²⁷⁵ Joshua Nkomo 'The case for majority rule in Rhodesia' Gonakudzingwa Camp, 1964, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro, Zimbabwe Independence Movements Select Documents, pp. 100-102.

²⁷⁶ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

²⁷⁷ Interview with James Chikerema, ZAPU founding member, Harare.

leadership of Chikerema was secretly set up by ZAPU. This Special Affairs became ZAPU's first armed wing. Militant cadres were secretly recruited into this group to carry out acts of sabotage. It was from this group that cadres were drawn from for military training.²⁷⁸ Charles Chikerema led the first group of cadres sent out for training by ZAPU in 1962, returning to Southern Rhodesia in 1964. Dabengwa joined the second group, which returned from training in 1965. In 1965, the first Command Structure for ZAPU's Special Affairs was set up with Akim Ndlovu as Commander, Robson Manyika, Deputy Commander, Dabengwa as Chief of Reconnaissance and Intelligence, Albert Mutinhiri looking after operations, and Report Mpofo in charge of Logistics. By the time the Command Structure was set up, about thirty ZAPU cadres had returned from training in various countries.²⁷⁹ China, the Soviet Union and Egypt offered the first training camps. As the struggle progressed, training camps were also established in Zambia, Tanzania, and Angola.²⁸⁰ Cuba and Algeria also offered training facilities for some of the cadres sent out by ZAPU.

ZAPU's early training was comprehensive. Cadres were trained to copy documents, open letters without detection and they were also given lectures in political science. Basic exposure to the use of guns and explosives was an essential part of the training of ZAPU cadres. Russia in particular gave ZAPU cadres intensive training in military intelligence.²⁸¹ As the first recruits began returning from training, there were differing opinions on the strategy to be adopted because of different training backgrounds. There was a group that was keen to launch immediate operations while

²⁷⁸ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

²⁷⁹ *ibid.*

²⁸⁰ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

²⁸¹ Henrick Ellert *The Rhodesian Front War Counter-insurgency and Guerrilla Warfare 1962-1980*, pp.10-11.

another group wanted to infiltrate and begin recruiting cadres. The Command Structure of the Special Affairs decided to establish a command system with rear bases and a Headquarters in Zambia. The first cadres were thus sent into Rhodesia to recruit and undertake limited operations when it was necessary.²⁸²

The first operations took place in 1965. Two units, each consisting of about five people, were infiltrated. One unit crossed the Zambezi River at Mana Pools, east of Chirundu, and the other unit infiltrated just east of the Victoria Falls. Rhodesian forces spotted the unit that crossed at Mana Pools after crossing the Zambezi River. In a surprise attack by the Rhodesian forces, two members of the unit were captured while the rest were killed. The other unit was betrayed by locals to Rhodesian Security forces once it reached populated areas. An attack by the Rhodesia forces resulted in loss of valuable manpower for ZAPU. These encounters in 1965 marked the beginning of the armed struggle.²⁸³ Among the first cadres to be sent into the country was Airman Chikwakwata, who was killed in a battle with Rhodesian forces, while John Maduso was captured and sentenced to death, charged with treason.²⁸⁴

The biggest problem the first cadres faced upon returning from training was that the police were after them. The Special Branch was aware that these cadres had gone for training and so it tracked them down. Small things betrayed the cadres, such as shoes or pants that had been bought in Russia. Consequently, most of the initial cadres got arrested in the process of infiltrating. Those who survived arrest returned to Zambia.

²⁸² Ngwabi Bhebe ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, p. 17.

²⁸³ *ibid.* p. 18.

²⁸⁴ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence.

Early attempts by ZAPU to infiltrate yielded no fruit. Besides failing to achieve anything significant, ZAPU lost some of its best-trained cadres through arrests.²⁸⁵

From 1965 until the middle of 1967, ZAPU military leaders suspended military operations while reviewing the strategy they had used. A camp called Nkomo was established 25km outside Lusaka, on a farm owned by a ZAPU supporter. The purpose of this camp was to bring together ZAPU cadres trained in different places for integration into a fighting unit. They were to prepare for battle so as to avoid the mistakes of the first units to be infiltrated. The review of strategy resulted in a decision to infiltrate larger groups to recruit and train cadres locally. These cadres were to be infiltrated through the northwestern part of Rhodesia.²⁸⁶

The ZAPU-ANC Alliance:

In February 1964, ZAPU sent Chikerema, Vice President, Nyandoro, National Secretary, Moyo, National Treasurer, Silundika, National Secretary for Publicity, and Ndlovu, Deputy National Secretary, to Zambia, to coordinate the struggle from there. Zambia had just been granted independence and thus was now in a position to support African liberation movements. Though Chikerema had initially set up base in Tanzania, Zambia's proximity to Rhodesia and the fact that Zambia and Rhodesia shared a common border, made it strategic to relocate to Zambia. Up to 1966, ZAPU had no bases to launch the armed struggle from. Trained cadres were placed in ordinary homes and on farms owned by blacks from Rhodesia who were living in Zambia and were sympathetic to the struggle. Until relations between ZAPU cadres and members of the Zambian

²⁸⁵ *ibid.*

²⁸⁶ Ngwabi Bhebe The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, p. 19.

security forces had been improved, ZAPU found it difficult to bring in arms into Zambia. This was partly due to the fact that the Zambian government feared being attacked by the Rhodesian government.²⁸⁷

In 1967, Oliver Tambo, leader of the ANC in exile, and Chikerema, committed their respective parties to a joint military collaboration aimed at helping *Umkhonto weSizwe* (MK) cadres establish a route to South Africa while simultaneously helping ZAPU cadres gain passage into Rhodesia. This followed a request by Tambo to ZAPU for assistance in creating a route for *Umkhonto weSizwe* cadres. The desire to liberate African people in South Africa and Rhodesia created the sense of fighting a common enemy, the minority white communities in both countries.²⁸⁸ Infiltration into South Africa through Botswana had proved impossible for *Umkhonto weSizwe* cadres because Botswana policemen were arresting them. Infiltration through Rhodesia, in the company of ZAPU cadres, would assure cadres from both parties the assistance of the local population.²⁸⁹

The experience from initial attempts by ZAPU to infiltrate cadres had failed because as they came in small numbers, Rhodesian security forces had easily nabbed them. Collaboration with *Umkhonto weSizwe* would thus give ZAPU a chance to infiltrate in larger groups. 1967 witnessed the first *Umkhonto weSizwe*-ZAPU operations in the Wankie area. About seventy cadres, twenty of who were *Umkhonto weSizwe* and fifty were ZAPU, crossed into Rhodesia, undetected by security forces. ZAPU cadres in this group were instructed that one unit should set up base in the Wankie area; another

²⁸⁷ *ibid.* p. 13-16.

²⁸⁸ Ngwabi Bhebe *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, pp. 19-20.

²⁸⁹ Dumiso Dabengwa 'ZIPRA in the Zimbabwe War of National Liberation' in N. Bhebe & T. Ranger (eds.) *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, p. 27.

unit would proceed to Tsholotsho, while the third unit was expected to operate south of Plumtree and then go with ANC cadres to Tuli River and help them cross into South Africa. The ZAPU guerrillas would then remain in the country to receive cadres from both parties coming into the Rhodesia.²⁹⁰ The instruction from ZAPU Headquarters was that ZAPU cadres would recruit and set up training camps in Rhodesia. Sabotage attacks would be launched when possible, but far away from bases. There was no intention to engage the enemy head on in conventional battles since the main task of the cadres was to recruit.²⁹¹

Unfortunately, lack of discipline cost the lives of many cadres in this group. An MK cadre decided not to walk with the others, opting to catch a lift and then stealing a motorcycle in Bulawayo. He got arrested and after being interrogated and tortured, revealed the movements of the group. Rhodesian forces pounced on the nationalist guerrillas, resulting in heavy casualties on both sides. ANC and ZAPU cadres who managed to escape found their way back to Zambia.²⁹²

Combined operations were also carried out in the Sipolilo area, on the northern border district of Rhodesia, close to Zambia. A much bigger group of about one hundred cadres, comprising three ZAPU platoons and one ANC platoon, was infiltrated into Rhodesia. ZAPU platoons were divided as follows: one unit was based in Sipolilo-Hurungwe area; another was to go further south to Kadoma. The third unit moved along the border with Mozambique. The MK unit was set to cross at Gonarezhou Park into Mozambique and then get into Kruger Game Park. While the infiltration was underway,

²⁹⁰ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

²⁹¹ Ngwabi Bhebe The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, p. 21.

²⁹² Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

some comrades who went to bath in the Angwa River were reckless. They left behind footprints that were discovered by the enemy. The Rhodesian government flew Spotter planes into the area to hunt down the guerrillas. Fierce battles were fought over several weeks. A number of nationalist cadres lost their lives, while others were captured and arrested by government security forces. The nationalist guerrillas who survived escaped into Botswana and made their way back to Zambia.²⁹³

An analysis of the impact of the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns must acknowledge that the infiltration of large groups of cadres to fight communicated to the white community that oppressed Africans were ready to die for the sake of the demands they were putting forward. A willingness to go to war for the sake of achieving these goals revealed the seriousness that ZAPU was giving the armed struggle.²⁹⁴ Violence was now going to be used in the struggle for independence. Large groups of guerrillas were being infiltrated into the country, showing that ZAPU had trained a number of cadres to carry out a military campaign as a way of putting pressure on the Rhodesian government.

The collaboration of ZAPU and the ANC resulted in a more explicit participation of South African police in the armed struggle in Rhodesia. The South African police was sent to block the infiltration of *Umkhonto weSizwe* into South Africa. The Rhodesian government was happy to get assistance from the South African regime in patrolling the border between Rhodesia and Zambia.²⁹⁵ The presence of the South African police in Rhodesia caused some discontent among African nationalists in Rhodesia and South Africa. ZANU and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) from South Africa criticized the

²⁹³ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

²⁹⁴ Interview with Mr. Swazini Ndlovu, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

²⁹⁵ *ibid.*

ZAPU-ANC alliance. They argued that the coming of South African police only served to strengthen the position of the Rhodesian Front. These critics argued that the ANC should not be involved in fighting within Rhodesia.²⁹⁶

While the presence of the South African police indeed strengthened the position of the Rhodesian Front, Dabengwa and others in ZAPU deny the accusation that *Umkhonto weSizwe* cadres were helping ZAPU to fight the struggle in Rhodesia. Referring to the nature of the agreement between the two parties, Dabengwa pointed out that ANC cadres were under strict instruction not to engage in battles within Rhodesia, except in self-defense. Consequently, ZAPU gave the impression that ANC cadres were just passing through Rhodesia. Dabengwa also raised the point that by the time ANC and ZAPU cadres began infiltrating into Rhodesia, ZAPU intelligence reports had already picked up the presence of South African police along the border with Zambia. ANC-ZAPU collaboration should thus not be seen as the only reason behind the presence of the South African police in Rhodesia.²⁹⁷ However, there was no way that ANC cadres would simply walk through Rhodesia without ending up engaging in battles because Rhodesian security forces were on high alert to prevent the infiltration of nationalist guerrillas.

Given the manner in which the Sipolilo and Wankie battles were fought, ZANU as well as the PAC also criticized ZAPU and the ANC for trying to take on a huge conventional army.²⁹⁸ Nationalist cadres were not yet ready for the level of fighting which they were exposed to since they had to fight a conventional army using guerrilla tactics. The Rhodesian army had much better military equipment than that of the nationalist cadres. However, given the conditions, we must give ZAPU and the ANC the

²⁹⁶ David Martin and Phyllis Johnson *The Struggle For Zimbabwe*, p. 10.

²⁹⁷ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

²⁹⁸ David Martin and Phyllis Johnson *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, p. 10.

credit they deserve for the courage cadres showed by engaging in the Wankie and Sipolilo battles.

Flower acknowledged the courage and high quality training of ZAPU and ANC cadres during the Wankie and Sipolilo battles. At this stage, nationalist guerrillas were fighting and infiltrating without much help from civilians. Their defeat was made possible only by the involvement of the Rhodesian Air Force.²⁹⁹ The strength of the combined ANC-ZAPU cadres was enough for the Rhodesian government to accept military assistance from South Africa openly.

Since the British government had indicated that if there was chaos in Rhodesia, it would consider intervening, the presence of the South African police in Rhodesia was interpreted by ZAPU as a sign of chaos, enough to justify British intervention.³⁰⁰ The British government did not see reason for military intervention since the combined efforts of the Rhodesian government and the South African police was managing to deal with the threat of the nationalists.

Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Publicity and Information, acknowledged that one of ZAPU's biggest mistakes at the beginning of the armed struggle was the large size of the groups infiltrated after the establishment of the ANC-ZAPU collaboration. They caused a logistical problem that was detrimental to the advancement of the war. The large groups that ZAPU and the MK infiltrated were highly visible and extremely difficult to accommodate and feed. It was also impossible to transport such large groups by road within Rhodesia without detection.³⁰¹ While a

²⁹⁹ Ken Flower *Serving Secretly Rhodesia's CIO Chief On Record*, p. 107-108.

³⁰⁰ 'ZAPU' Statement on ZAPU-ANC Alliance' December 1968, in Christopher Nyangoni and Gideon Nyandoro (eds.) *Zimbabwe Independence Movements Select Documents*, p. 121.

³⁰¹ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu.

significant number of ZAPU cadres made their way into the country during this phase of the struggle, they suffered heavy casualties in these early engagements. The Wankie battle is reported to have cost the lives of thirty nationalist cadres, while twenty were captured. The few who managed to escape made their way back to Lusaka.³⁰² Only a few nationalist cadres from the Sipolilo group survived the attack. Some ZAPU officials held Chikerema responsible for the loss of many lives, accusing him of having kept the Sipolilo group for too long in an area that was constantly under surveillance by the Smith regime.³⁰³ Cadres that ZAPU had trained lost their lives even before they had made significant contributions to the struggle. The cadres who died in the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns had been sent mainly to do reconnaissance work and to prepare the way for the infiltration of more cadres. Their deaths thus meant that ZAPU lost people who had knowledge about possible internal movements even before that knowledge had been used.³⁰⁴

The loss of lives in the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns testified to the African people in Rhodesia that the armed struggle was not going to be an easy task. It was not going to be easy for a guerrilla movement to challenge a well-established conventional army. The sacrifice that the first cadres made inspired many young people among the African population to join the struggle. As Rhodesian forces clashed with ZAPU cadres, the differences between the Rhodesian government and the nationalists reached a point where simple reconciliation was no longer possible. Both sides had shown their determination to fight for their interests.³⁰⁵

³⁰² Ken Flower *Serving Secretly Rhodesia's CIO Chief On Record*, p. 107.

³⁰³ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

³⁰⁴ Interview with Mr. Swazini Ndlovu, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

³⁰⁵ *ibid.*

The problem of discipline amongst ZAPU and ANC cadres was exposed by the manner in which the carelessness of some of the cadres compromised their security.³⁰⁶ The ANC cadre who refused to walk with the others and instead caught a lift and the footprints, which were discovered after some cadres had gone to bath in the Angwa River, helped the Rhodesian security forces to hunt down the guerrillas.³⁰⁷ It was enough for them to catch just one whom they tortured until he revealed the movements of the others. The question of discipline among cadres reflects badly on the nature of training they were exposed to. One would have expected rigid discipline from cadres who were going into a very hostile area. However, that indiscipline can be viewed as a reflection of frustration among cadres because of the challenges they were facing by walking long distances in the bush and as part of tension caused by putting cadres trained in different places together before undertaking a proper integration exercise.

ZAPU's infiltration in the first stages of the armed struggle produced many casualties for the party but also hardened the spirits of the cadres who managed to make their way back to Zambia. According to Chikerema, this was especially true with the cadres who participated in the Wankie battles. They realized that with good training, Rhodesian security forces were not to be feared. The main problem though had to do with supplies. These first cadres had carried all their supplies; ammunition and food were taken to certain fixed points, but as troops moved in battle; storage places became too far and sometimes insecure for the cadres to reach.³⁰⁸ Consequently, cadres ended up running short of supplies.

³⁰⁶ Ngwabi Bhebe *The ZAPU ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, p. 24.

³⁰⁷ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

³⁰⁸ Interview with James Chikerema, ZAPU founding member, Harare.

Towards the end of 1967, ZAPU and ANC guerrillas introduced a new tactic. A supply line with good stocks was established. A reliable supply line for ZAPU guerrillas was essential since they had not yet established a strong relationship with civilians for the guerrillas to infiltrate while depending on civilians. By then, CIO penetration of ZAPU was still minimal, so it was difficult for the Rhodesian forces to monitor the movements of the guerrillas. Consequently, nationalist guerrillas had an advantage over government security forces. The presence of Rhodesian scouts across the Zambezi and within Zambia later changed the situation such that by the end of 1968, government security forces had the upper hand. Infiltration and recruitment across the Zambezi gradually became difficult.³⁰⁹

ZAPU sources claim that Rhodesian forces also experienced significant losses during the first infiltrations. During the 1967 encounters, four Rhodesian helicopters were destroyed and seven Rhodesian soldiers were killed. However, by the end of 1969, the ANC-ZAPU alliance had come to an end. Both parties had lost a lot of manpower in clashes with the Rhodesians, and a continuation of such encounters would simply deplete the number of nationalist guerrillas without achieving anything significant. MK cadres had not managed to infiltrate into South Africa by collaborating with ZAPU. A review of strategy was inevitable. Collaboration between the ANC and ZAPU came to an end because an internal split that resulted from attempts to review the initial encounters of the armed struggle haunted ZAPU.³¹⁰ The manner in which Chikerema was directing ZAPU's war was challenged by other members of the external leadership, resulting in a leadership crisis in Lusaka. Up to 1967, ZAPU had used a Maoist strategy that saw its

³⁰⁹ Ken Flower *Serving Secretly Rhodesia's CIO Chief On Record*, p. 108-109.

³¹⁰ Wellington Nyangoni *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)*, p. 101.

cadres fighting in rural areas and targeting government strongholds. Strategy had to change following the decline of manpower.³¹¹

Joint Military Command (JMC):

While the ZAPU-MK alliance was underway, there was an attempt to establish military collaboration between ZAPU and ZANU. The idea behind the Joint Military Command (JMC) was that military leaders from ZAPU and ZANU would work together in coordinating the armed struggle by having cadres from the two parties fighting together. According to Dabengwa, the idea of setting up a JMC was initially mooted in 1967 by the OAU. At Mbeya in Tanzania, the countries that were hosting them pressurized ZAPU and ZANU and they ended up signing an agreement that they did not really have faith in. The Mbeya agreement set up the JMC, stipulating that cadres from the two parties would fight side by side. The leadership of the JMC would be drawn from both parties. The JMC remained an agreement on paper only because of the unwillingness of the two parties to work with each other. ZAPU sabotaged the agreement by sending junior officers to work with top ZANU commanders. 1967 was a time when ZANU was still struggling to get established. There was no interest within ZAPU to work with a party that was just beginning to recruit and train cadres since ZAPU was already engaged in fighting.³¹² Even though ZANU was keen to participate in the Mbeya agreement, ZAPU was not willing to implement an agreement which would see ZAPU 'carry' ZANU on its back. Consequently, the Mbeya agreement collapsed and the JMC failed to take off.³¹³

³¹¹ *ibid.* pp. 103 and 108.

³¹² Dumiso Dabengwa 'ZIPRA in the Zimbabwe War of National Liberation' in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger (eds.) *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, p. 29.

³¹³ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

ZAPU's Second Internal Crisis:

Between 1969 and 1970, ZAPU did not fight.³¹⁴ This was partly due to the fact that infiltration across the Zambezi had become increasingly difficult, and also due to an internal leadership crisis ZAPU was experiencing. In October 1969, Chikerema took a reporter from World in Action and a film unit into a ZAPU guerrilla camp by the banks of the Zambezi River on the Zambian side. The journalists were allowed to film and interview ZAPU cadres who were waiting to infiltrate into Rhodesia. The rest of the ZAPU executive in exile in Zambia and the Zambian government were surprised to see the images on television since Chikerema had not said anything to them.³¹⁵ Though the Zambian government was offering ZAPU bases, it did not want to admit it openly least the Rhodesian government used that as an excuse for attacking Zambia. Allowing a television crew to film cadres in their camps compromised their security because the enemy could make use of the information gathered from the film to plan attacks.³¹⁶ Consequently, the Zambian government and some members of the exiled ZAPU executive felt uncomfortable with Chikerema's move.

It is difficult to understand why Chikerema let ZAPU guerrillas be filmed and interviewed by a crew which made use of the film in a way which ZAPU could not control. Mabhena suggested that Chikerema's main problem was his desire to show off power. According to Mabhena when Chikerema took the journalists to the camps, he did not think about matters of security at all. His interest was to reveal to the world the fact

³¹⁴ *ibid.*

³¹⁵ Kees Maxey *The Fight For Zimbabwe: The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia Since UDI*, p. 15.

³¹⁶ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

that he was in charge of an army that was ready to launch attacks on the Rhodesian government.³¹⁷

Confrontation within the ZAPU exiled executive came out openly after Moyo, the National Treasurer, put his reflections on ZAPU's war in writing, putting forward points that challenged the manner in which Chikerema was taking charge of the war. In 'Observations on our Struggle', Moyo pointed out that a War Council with five members had been set up to coordinate the armed struggle. This War Council was answerable to the National Executive of the party. However, since the middle of 1969 there had been a gradual deterioration of military administration within ZAPU as strained relations between some members of the War Council and some members of the military administration were causing problems. There was also a serious lack of planning of strategy and no coordination in the deployment of cadres, according to Moyo.³¹⁸ Allegations of poor planning and lack of coordinated deployment of cadres directly challenged Chikerema's responsibility within the party. Since the beginning of ZAPU's war, Chikerema had been directly responsible over the armed guerrillas, but not as a private army. He was supposed to run the armed wing of the party in consultation with the War Council and answerable to the National Executive, which gave Moyo the right to question Chikerema's strategy.

Moyo further remarked that discipline was becoming a matter of concern among ZAPU cadres as tensions and mistrust were being fuelled by allegations of corruption and tribalism within the party. There was a general feeling that Ndebele speaking members of the party were being favored by getting opportunities to study which Shona speakers

³¹⁷ Interview with Mr. Mabhena, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

³¹⁸ J.Z Moyo, 'Zimbabwe African People's Union: Observations on Our Struggle,' National Archives, Harare, 25 February 1970, GEN P/ZIM, Acc. 39854, pp. 1-3.

were being denied.³¹⁹ The fact that guerrillas in Lusaka were choosing where they wanted to live, instead of living together in camps, was another manifestation of the indiscipline Moyo was referring to. The example of a cadre who refused to be sent by Moyo to Manyika, the Chief of Staff, was yet another example of the breakdown of discipline among the cadres.³²⁰ Ordinarily, guerrillas were expected to take orders from members of the National Executive without any problems. The fact that there was a cadre who would not take orders from the National Treasurer was a sign that there was a serious breakdown of discipline in the party. In any military setting, discipline is an important thing. One must call to mind the fact that the lives of some of the first nationalist cadres to infiltrate into Rhodesia were lost because of the lack of discipline by some cadres.

The question of tribalism is rejected by some people when discussing ZAPU's second internal crisis. Jane Ngwenya, a founding member of the ZAPU Executive, denies overtones of tribal sentiments in the tensions surrounding the second internal crisis. According to her, there was competition for power among members of the party's Executive in Zambia and this resulted in a split.³²¹ ZANU sources suggested that the split experienced by ZAPU in 1972 was not caused by tribal clashes. Instead, ZANU presents the crisis as having originated from clashes within ZAPU's War Council. Moyo and Chikerema clashed because ZAPU's strategy in the 1960s had led to the deaths of many soldiers, with no significant gains for the party. Disagreement on the way forward led to irreconcilable differences between the two leaders.³²² There is no doubt that the results

³¹⁹ Interview with Mr. James Chikerema, ZAPU founding member, Harare.

³²⁰ J.Z Moyo 'ZAPU: Observations on Our Struggle,' p. 3.

³²¹ Interview with Mrs. Jane Ngwenya, founding member of ZAPU, Bulawayo.

³²² David Martin and Phyllis Johnson The Struggle For Zimbabwe, p. 29-30.

of the first incursions caused disappointment within ZAPU. However, the impact of the role played by tribal sentiments can only be fully grasped when one takes a look at the effects of the Chikerema split on ZAPU. This point will be discussed in more detail when analyzing the impact of Chikerema's split.

The problem within the party was also being reflected through the manner in which members of the National Executive carried out their responsibilities. Moyo raised the point that lack of specification of duties for members of the Executive left him not knowing the scope of his duties as a member of the War Council. Moyo felt left out in some of the decisions that had a direct bearing on the manner in which ZAPU executed its war. The filming of ZAPU cadres was of major concern to him. As a member of the War Council, Moyo was not consulted before the filming was done and the film was hidden from him, an expression of no confidence in him.³²³ Moyo's observations concluded with suggestions on the way forward. Military rules had to be implemented immediately and the rights of all members of the Executive were to be respected. The unity of those involved in military administration was to be addressed as a matter of urgency and it was proposed that regular meetings between members of the War Council and members of the High Command were essential so that the planning of strategy would be a team effort.³²⁴

Moyo's observations created the impression that there was an individual, or a small group of people running the administration of ZAPU affairs in exile, while unjustifiably sidelining other members of the National Executive. In his capacity as Acting President of the party, Chikerema responded to Moyo by stating that there were a

³²³ J.Z Moyo 'ZAPU: Observations on Our Struggle,' p. 4.

³²⁴ *ibid.*

number of misrepresentations in the 'Observations.' Going back to 1963, the time of the Cold Comfort People's Conference, Chikerema remarked that only one person had been elected to lead the party as a way of avoiding the problem of power hungry individuals. Nkomo had been appointed the leader of the party, and in his absence, his deputy would take charge. Chikerema argued that Nkomo had asked him to lead the party in exile, and since ZAPU had moved away from the concept of collective responsibility, all party structures in exile were answerable to him.³²⁵ The notion of collective planning of strategy, which Moyo was suggesting, was not acceptable to Chikerema who was regarding himself as the sole leader of the party.

Denying allegations that ZAPU was not actively engaging in the armed struggle, Chikerema pointed out that the aim of the armed struggle for ZAPU was to instill fear within the white settler community through acts of sabotage and so provide sufficient reason for British military intervention through which blacks would be granted majority rule. Given the goal of ZAPU's war, the fighting cadres were investing sufficient effort to meet ZAPU's requirements.³²⁶ According to Chikerema, his apology to the Zambian government over the filming of ZAPU cadres was sufficient to close the case. There was no need for further discussion of the issue within ZAPU. Appealing to the authority given to him by Nkomo, Chikerema dissolved the military command, replacing it with another group and a command structure that gave him direct power over the party.

³²⁵ ZAPU: Reply to 'Observations on Our Struggle' by James Chikerema, Acting President, Lusaka, 17 March 1970, in C. Nyangoni & G. Nyandoro (eds.) Zimbabwe Independence Movements Select Documents, pp. 147-149.

³²⁶ *ibid.* p. 150.

Silundika, Ndlovu, and Moyo, among others, lost their jobs, which were taken over by Chikerema.³²⁷

Chikerema's move to suspend members of the Executive who were asking for proper leadership of the party was interpreted as a *coup* by the suspended members. A statement issued by Moyo, Ndlovu and Silundika argued that Chikerema's claim that the Cold Comfort Conference had given all power to the President of the party was not true because the People's Congress and the People's Council had remained as powerful bodies within the structures of the party. They also reminded Chikerema that he had not been sent out alone. The fact that they were all members of the National Executive, commissioned by the President of the party to deal with party affairs in exile meant that they were equally responsible for the manner in which the party was being administered.³²⁸ Fellow members of the Executive thus rejected Chikerema's assumption of power. His actions gave the impression that it was not proper for him, as leader of the party in exile, to be challenged, just as it was not right for the life President of the party to be challenged. Bearing in mind that the idea of a life President for the party was suggested by Chikerema at the Cold Comfort Conference, there is reason to conclude that Chikerema probably regarded himself as Vice President for life, and thus equally immune to challenge. Chikerema was of the opinion that people like Moyo, political leaders within the party, should have nothing to do with military matters. As such, Chikerema did not accept criticisms from Moyo over military matters.³²⁹

³²⁷ *ibid.* pp. 159-160.

³²⁸ 'ZAPU: On The *Coup* Crisis Precipitated by J. Chikerema,' Statement issued by J.Z. Moyo, Edward Ndlovu, & T.G. Silundika, Lusaka, 21 March 1970, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro (eds.) Zimbabwe Independence Movements, pp. 162-163.

³²⁹ Dumiso Dabengwa 'ZIPRA in the Zimbabwe War of National Liberation,' in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger (eds.) Soldiers in Zimbabwe's War, p. 31.

Fighting erupted between members of the two groups in Lusaka, and these were often very bloody.³³⁰ The tension between Chikerema and Moyo degenerated into a tribal clash, with Shona speakers rallying behind Chikerema, while Ndebele speakers and Kalanga speakers teamed up behind Moyo. The inevitable split within the party was based on these tribal lines, further weakening ZAPU.³³¹

Chikerema brought another perspective to the crisis by arguing that the leaders of Tanzania, Zambia and Botswana caused the crisis, as they tried to create unity between ZANU and ZAPU. According to him, the Frontline States had proposed that ZAPU and ZANU should cease to exist and form a front uniting all African nationalists. Only this front would get funding from the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) Liberation Committee. Chikerema claims that when the idea was mooted, he sent a memorandum to Nkomo but Nkomo's reply did not reach him because the Moyo faction intercepted it. Nkomo had apparently given Chikerema the green light to set up of the front. Meanwhile, Chikerema had already begun negotiations with Chitepo and Shamuyarira, from ZANU. Objections to the formation of the front from Moyo saw the ZANU delegation withdrawing from the talks.³³² Shamuyarira compliments Chikerema's point on the attempt by the OAU to unite ZANU and ZAPU. He argues that issues of internal democracy split ZAPU's external leadership. While Moyo, Silundika, and Ndlovu opposed unity with ZANU, Chikerema and Nyandoro were in favor of it. The split became inevitable as direct confrontation between the two factions caused a stalemate in the party and as the Moyo faction rejected the proposed unity with ZANU while a faction

³³⁰ Masipula Sithole *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle*, p. 49.

³³¹ Ngwabi Bhebe *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, p. 25.

³³² Interview with Mr. James Chikerema, ZAPU founding member, Harare.

in ZANU also rejected the proposal.³³³ Moyo regarded unity with ZANU as useless since ZANU did not have a well-established military wing as yet. ZANU had not yet reached the levels of training cadres, which ZAPU was now capable of.³³⁴

Adding to the chaos within ZAPU at this time was the mutiny of some cadres led by Walter Muthimukulu in 1971. Professor Makurane gave an eyewitness account of how some ZAPU cadres encouraged ZAPU members to retire to Zimbabwe House, the party's headquarters, in Lusaka, on one particular evening, from a pub in Lusaka where they were gathered for drinks. Meanwhile, the Muthimukulu group laid ambush and arrested everyone who came into Zimbabwe House. Dabengwa was one of the people arrested. Thomas Ngwenya, ZAPU's driver, managed to escape from Zimbabwe House and went to Makurane's house where Ndlovu and another ZAPU leader, Sibanda, had slept and he reported the arrests. Muthimukulu's group claimed to have come from the war front and wanted to kill all party administrators and take over the leadership of the party because leaders in Lusaka were not taking care of cadres on the battlefield. However, since it was clear that Muthimukulu was not interested in arresting Chikerema and Nyandoro, there was speculation in ZAPU that Muthimukulu was working with Chikerema. Once alerted of the problem, Ndlovu reported the matter to the Zambian Home Affairs Minister. The Zambian government negotiated the release of the people taken prisoners by Muthimukulu's group. The British High Commissioner then took members of the Muthimukulu group into exile in Britain to Zambia as a result of a deal made by the Zambian government.³³⁵

³³³ Nathan Shamuyarira 'An Overview of The Struggle for Unity and Independence' in Canaan Banana (ed.) *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1990*, p. 18-19.

³³⁴ Martin Meredith *The Past is Another Country Rhodesia: UDI to Zimbabwe*, p. 72.

³³⁵ Interview with Professor P. Makurane, Academic, Bulawayo.

Dabengwa suggested that at the time of the Chikerema crisis, there was speculation within ZAPU that Chikerema was collaborating with the enemy. Chikerema's unwillingness to commit cadres to fighting from 1969 seemed to have been prompted by a belief he had that there was going to be an internal settlement soon. Such a belief could only come if one was having direct contacts with the government.³³⁶ The suspicion of collaborating with the government was also strengthened by the fact that while Muthimukulu's group did not want to arrest Chikerema and Nyandoro; it wanted to kill all key leaders of the Moyo faction. The manner in which members of Muthimukulu's group were taken to Britain after the mutiny created the impression among faithful ZAPU cadres that Muthimukulu and Chikerema were probably collaborating with Britain and the Rhodesian government. Some members of the Muthimukulu group came back to Zimbabwe after ZANU had won the 1980 elections and they were given government posts. According to Pathisa Nyathi, had ZAPU won, none of these people would have set foot in Zimbabwe.³³⁷

Frustration among ZAPU cadres had crept in. While they had trained to fight, they were finding themselves being restricted to camps, with no chance of engaging in battle as they had expected. Those who were on the battlefield accused members of the Executive of living in comfort in Lusaka while they were suffering from lack of supplies in the bush. The leadership was accused of enjoying 'chicken in the basket,' a Lusaka Hotel delicacy popular with African nationalists from Rhodesia, while guerrillas were starving in the bush.³³⁸ ZAPU cadres also complained that they were being forced to

³³⁶ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

³³⁷ Interviews with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, and Mr. Swazini Ndlovu, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

³³⁸ Interview with Mrs. Mary Ndlovu, ZAPU member, Bulawayo.

build houses for some of their commanders instead of fighting. This added to the disgruntlement among cadres who believed that their task was to fight a liberation war not to make sure that their commanders lived in comfortable houses. Respect of the military code of conduct was compromised as cadres found themselves living non-military lives.³³⁹

As attempts to unite ZAPU and ZANU failed, Shamuyarira was forced to leave ZANU by a faction in ZANU that was against the idea of unity with ZAPU. Shamuyarira teamed up with Chikerema in announcing the launching of the Front For The Liberation of Zimbabwe (FROLIZI) in October 1971. The founding members of FROLIZI claimed that they were uniting ZAPU and ZANU, a point that was rejected by mainstream ZAPU and ZANU members.³⁴⁰ The formation of FROLIZI effectively meant that ZAPU lost some members who followed Chikerema and Nyandoro into the new party. The next section looks at some of the effects of this split on ZAPU's war effort.

Effects of the Second Internal Crisis:

Just as there were positive and negative results from the 1963 split, the effects of the second internal crisis should be seen in a similar light. Some of the effects were devastating to ZAPU's war effort, in fact, marking a turning point in ZAPU's engagement in the armed struggle. ZAPU came out of the second internal crisis with a more professionally organized and disciplined military structure.

While the party's leadership in exile was caught up in arguments, active involvement in the struggle suffered neglect. The stalemate between the Chikerema faction and the Moyo faction resulted in intra-party clashes. Focus was inevitably shifted

³³⁹ *ibid.*

³⁴⁰ Kees Maxey *The Fight For Zimbabwe: The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia Since UDI*, p.19.

from the war that ZAPU guerrillas had been engaged in to bloody clashes among members of the opposing factions in Lusaka. The emergence of the Muthimukulu group did not make things better. The mutiny by the Muthimukulu group brought in cadres from the frontline into the squabbles within the party's leadership. Instead of fighting the enemy, the focus became Lusaka where there was a power struggle for the way forward for ZAPU.³⁴¹ The tension between the two camps resulted in a stoppage of all ZAPU military operations, which only revived effectively seven years later.³⁴²

For cadres who had been keen to fight and thus were finding themselves caught in between the two factions, there was no reason to remain within ZAPU. They defected to join ZANU, which was beginning to have well-organized military structures, even though it was still struggling for recognition. Manyika, as ZAPU's Chief of Staff, had been involved in talks with FRELIMO over collaboration in the opening up of the Tete Front when the internal crisis erupted. As the stalemate among the ZAPU leadership continued, Manyika went over to ZANU, and with him went the contacts that ZAPU had established with FRELIMO for military collaboration in the opening of the Tete Front. ZANU benefited from the strategy for infiltration and military engagement that Manyika took away from ZAPU. As Chief of Staff, Manyika had inside knowledge of ZAPU's military plans. Rex Nhongo, who eventually became one of ZANU's leading commanders, also broke away from ZAPU during this time of the internal crisis.³⁴³ Manyika, Nhongo and many other soldiers regarded the stoppage of the war because of the disagreement among their political leaders as detrimental to the cause for the struggle for the liberation of African people. ZAPU thus lost essential links with FRELIMO,

³⁴¹ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

³⁴² Martin Meredith *The Past is Another Country, Rhodesia: UDI to Zimbabwe*, p. 72.

³⁴³ *ibid.*

which were embraced by ZANU. Some scholars have pointed out that ZAPU's failure to respond to the invitation by FRELIMO was a sign of ZAPU's unwillingness to commit itself to the armed struggle.³⁴⁴ One must acknowledge that given what was happening within ZAPU at that time, there was no way that negotiations with FRELIMO could continue. ZAPU had become paralyzed because of tension among the external leaders. The internal crisis cost ZAPU the possibility of infiltrating from Mozambique.³⁴⁵

The second internal crisis saw the exiled members of ZAPU splitting into four groups. There was the Chikerema and Nyandoro faction that established FROLIZI, the Muthimukulu group, which ended up being forced into exile, the Moyo group, which remained faithful to ZAPU, and the group of cadres led by Manyika and Nhongo, which defected to ZANU. ZAPU cadres had to choose from these four groups in deciding their future in the armed struggle. Bhebe states that about eighty fighters only remained faithful to ZAPU. As such, ZAPU had to start from scratch in re-establishing its military campaign.³⁴⁶ Instead of active engagement ZAPU cadres changed their tactics and started focusing on planting landmines along the banks of the Zambezi.³⁴⁷ About one hundred ZAPU cadres were deported from Zambia after the crisis, accused of being Rhodesian spies. The deportation of these cadres further weakened ZAPU's participation in the war.³⁴⁸

Contrary to the opinions of those who dismiss the role played by tribal sentiments in the second internal crisis, Mary Ndlovu, the wife of Edward Ndlovu, ZAPU's National

³⁴⁴ This is a common comment from scholars who present ZANU as only party seriously committed to the armed struggle.

³⁴⁵ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

³⁴⁶ Ngwabi Bhebe *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, pp. 25-26.

³⁴⁷ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu.

³⁴⁸ Kees Maxey 'The Armed Struggle in Zimbabwe and The Gaps in Our Knowledge' in *Conference on Zimbabwe Papers*, University of Leeds, 1998, p. 4.

Treasurer, argued that as ZAPU re-organized in the aftermath of the crisis, it took up a more Ndebele identity. As Chikerema left ZAPU, he was followed by the bulk of Shona speakers who were members of the party. Ndlovu pointed out however that the bulk of ZAPU supporters had been Ndebele speakers anyway.³⁴⁹ From the time of the second internal crisis, ZAPU became associated more and more with the Ndebele speaking communities of the southern-western and Midlands regions of Rhodesia. The regionalism that had shown face at the time of the 1963 split became more defined after the second internal crisis. This regionalism was strengthened by the manner in which ZAPU recruited cadres from the 1970s, focusing mainly on Matebeleland and Midlands.

Revival of the JMC:

When Chikerema broke away from ZAPU, setting up FROLIZI with Shamuyarira and claiming that the said new party was a union of ZAPU and ZANU, the mainstream ZAPU and ZANU leaders attempted to pre-empt Chikerema and Shamuyarira's efforts by reviving the Joint Military Command (JMC) in Tanzania, in 1972. If Chikerema's claim had been recognized by the OAU and Frontline States, then, the original ZAPU and ZANU would have lost the funding they were getting, besides losing the audience they had been previously granted by the organizations.³⁵⁰ The motivation behind the revival of the JMC was thus directed at weakening FROLIZI, not the settler government.

At the time of the Chikerema crisis, the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA) had promised ZAPU financial and material assistance valued at 85 000 Sw Crs. This assistance was not handed over because of the internal crisis. The revival of the JMC was aimed at securing this grant. In August 1972, ZAPU blew up a goods train on the

³⁴⁹ Interview with Mrs. Mary Ndlovu, founding member of ZAPU, Bulawayo.

³⁵⁰ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

Victoria Falls railway line and also blew up a Rhodesian army truck, killing seven Rhodesian soldiers. SIDA responded to these sabotage attacks and attempts by ZAPU to collaborate with ZANU by reinstating annual grants. 50 000 Sw Crs was paid to ZAPU's Welfare Trust Account in Zambia. From 1972 to 1974, ZAPU's sabotage acts were aimed at claiming stability within the party.³⁵¹

Self-preservation was a strong aspect in all the attempts at collaboration in the struggle. Each party sought agreements that would ensure its continual existence. Political union was never attained between ZAPU and ZANU during the struggle because either party wanted to be assured of the opportunity of setting up the first independent government in Zimbabwe. If Chikerema had snatched the funding that ZAPU and ZANU were getting, it would have become increasingly difficult for the two parties to continue with the armed struggle, since they did not have sufficient sources of income within Rhodesia. In reviving the JMC, the two were not destroying their political identities. Instead, they were preserving themselves, yet setting up collaboration in military activities. Power was at stake and the two nationalist parties were competing for it as well. One could argue that the existence of ZAPU and ZANU was indeed a blessing in disguise to the struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe. Despite the desire of the Frontline States to ensure that African nationalists were united, the manner in which ZAPU and ZANU sought to outdo each other in the struggle at times contributed positively to the struggle. Unintentionally, the efforts of the nationalists would compliment and provide checks and balances on what the other party was doing.

³⁵¹ Ngwabi Bhebe The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, p. 27.

In reviving the JMC, ZAPU's interest lay in wanting to prove stability so as to impress donors, and also lay a foundation for unity with ZANU in the future by fighting together. Again, the JMC was stillborn.³⁵² Political leaders from ZAPU and ZANU were trying to forge the coordinated military effort, which should perhaps have best been left to military cadres who understood the dynamics of trying to bring fighters from different parties together.

The JMC was the beginning of many attempts to unite ZAPU and ZANU. The idea was to set up military collaboration with the belief that political union would follow naturally. This was a serious miscalculation. There was no way that one could expect any sort of unity to flow naturally between ZAPU and ZANU because of the hostilities which had been experienced since the time of the split in 1963. These two parties were competing for many things such that expecting unity naturally was being too optimistic. Perhaps ZAPU was hoping that by accepting military collaboration, ZANU cadres would encourage their political leaders to go back to ZAPU. The attempt to revive the JMC was very short lived.³⁵³

According to ZANU sources, the formation of the JMC was not to be perceived as a means to an automatic victory in the struggle. The importance of thinking about a united front before partisan politics was highlighted but talk about the logistics of the JMC was not accompanied by joint action on the battlefield. ZANU's advanced infiltration through the northeast would have to be pulled back in order to accommodate ZAPU. This would have slowed down ZANU's infiltration into Rhodesia, an unacceptable option for a party that wanted to distinguish itself as having a radical

³⁵² Ngwabi Bhebe The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, p. 27.

³⁵³ Interview with Professor P. Makurane, Academic, Bulawayo.

military wing. By March 1973, it was clear that there was not going to be a united military front.³⁵⁴ Just as ZAPU had found the question of setting up military collaboration with ZANU in 1967 detrimental to the war ZAPU was already prepared to launch, in 1972, ZANU came to the conclusion that military collaboration with a party that had just experienced an internal crisis, and had lost a number of cadres in the process, was not a viable idea. ZANU's war was on such a good footing that the party had no need for ZAPU's collaboration and saw no reason for dividing the fame it was gaining within Rhodesia because of its massive infiltration and recruitment.³⁵⁵

While the involvement of outsiders was always welcome in bringing ZANU and ZAPU together, the involvement of Nyerere in the setting up of the JMC saw ZAPU going into the agreement with misgivings. According to Mary Ndlovu, a member of ZAPU, from the time Nyerere embarrassed Nkomo following Nkomo's attempt to set up a government in exile in 1963, ZAPU had not trusted Nyerere again. ZAPU thus never gave itself whole-heartedly to an alliance that was being drawn up in Tanzania. Given ZANU's reluctance to collaborate with ZAPU and ZAPU's lack of confidence in Nyerere, there was no way that an agreement between ZAPU and ZANU, mediated by Nyerere, would take off. Nyerere never trusted or liked Nkomo, while Nkomo saw no reason for trusting Nyerere since he was aware that he did not like him.³⁵⁶

Since the JMC was the first serious attempt to unite ZAPU and ZANU, its failure was not surprising. Both parties were not yet ready to accommodate each other.³⁵⁷ However, even though it was a complete failure, the JMC set the ground for the

³⁵⁴ Kees Maxey The Fight For Zimbabwe: The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia Since UDI, p. 20-21.

³⁵⁵ *ibid.*

³⁵⁶ Interview with Mrs. Mary Ndlovu, member of ZAPU, Bulawayo.

³⁵⁷ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

establishment of the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA), another attempt at establishing military collaboration between ZAPU and ZANU.³⁵⁸

Reviving and re-structuring ZAPU:

Highlighting the manner in which ZAPU's war effort was weakened by the second internal crisis should not overshadow some of the positive developments that rose from the crisis. As ZAPU reviewed the impact of the first incursions and as ZAPU went through a process of self-evaluation, lessons from mistakes of the past were taken note of and plans for the future were set up in a manner that sought to avoid past mistakes. A revived ZAPU in exile emerged, now under the leadership of Moyo.³⁵⁹

In a letter to SIDA in 1972, Moyo pointed out that ZAPU was undergoing a process of restructuring in order to launch the armed struggle on an improved level.³⁶⁰ This restructuring saw the drawing up of a new strategy for the armed struggle. A Revolutionary Council was created and in turn, it set up the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) in 1972. The Revolutionary Council was responsible for the liberation campaign in and outside the country, including the gathering of the required resources. It was also expected to engage in constant review of the party's strategy, dealing with aspects of strategy that required improvement or change.³⁶¹ The Revolutionary Council consisted of four National Executive members, six external party representatives, two representatives from the trade union, and twenty-six ZIPRA officers. Alfred Nikita Mangena was appointed Commander of the army, with Lookout Masuku as

³⁵⁸ *ibid.*

³⁵⁹ *ibid.*

³⁶⁰ Ngwabi Bhebe The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, p. 26.

³⁶¹ Dumiso Dabengwa 'ZIPRA in the Zimbabwe War of National Liberation', in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War, p. 32.

his Deputy.³⁶² Dabengwa became Secretary of the Revolutionary Council, while Moyo was overall in charge. As ZIPRA was being set up, cadres took an oath of loyalty to the party, vowing never to abandon ZAPU again. This oath was motivated by the experience of witnessing two splits out of which cadres trained and raised by ZAPU had joined rival groups. Through the oath, the cadres bound themselves in unity and loyal service under ZAPU. According to Nyathi, it was partly because of this oath of loyalty that some ZIPRA cadres refused to join ZANU PF at the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987. They respected their promise to be loyal to ZAPU. To them, joining ZANU PF was a betrayal to ZAPU.³⁶³

The restructuring process, which ZAPU went through, resulted in one very distinct development. Having experienced the dangers of putting too much power in the hands of one person, the new structure ZAPU came up with sought to avoid the possibility of dictatorship by encouraging broad participation in the administration of military and political affairs. While the Revolutionary Council decided on party policy, the implementation lay in the hands of the War Council. The party's Central Committee appointed this War Council.³⁶⁴ All party administrators were sent for military training as ZAPU was restructuring. This was to expose them to some of the experiences guerrillas went through, an experience that would help party administrators understand guerrillas.³⁶⁵

ZAPU undertook a heavy recruitment exercise to make up for the depleted numbers of cadres after the second internal crisis. Recruitment was on the whole

³⁶² Ngwabi Bhebe The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, p. 26.

³⁶³ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

³⁶⁴ Ngwabi Bhebe The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, p. 26.

³⁶⁵ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

countrywide, but tended to focus on the Matebeleland and Midlands areas and parts of Mashonaland West, areas in which ZAPU cadres had operated during the first incursions. Recruits were taken to Botswana first and then flown to training camps in Zambia, Tanzania, and Angola, with others being sent out for specialized training in Cuba, and Russia.³⁶⁶

ZAPU established a number of camps in Zambia. Nampundwe camp was the first holding camp to be established in Lusaka as the number of recruits began rising. At Nampundwe, recruits were sorted according to age, sex and physical fitness. Those below the age of sixteen were put into a school in the camp. Six military training camps were set up in Zambia where cadres underwent an eight month long basic military training programme after which those selected for specialization were sent to other African countries or overseas.³⁶⁷ Training camps marked a transition from civilian life to life as a soldier. Recruits were exposed to physical exercises, lessons on guerrilla skills, learning how to handle and use weapons, and basic survival tactics in the bush. Political education was an essential component of the training. Recruits were introduced to the concepts of socialism and they were taught that they were fighting against an oppressive system rather than against white people. They were reminded of the various reasons for taking up the armed struggle. Life in the camps was harsh because of food shortages, strict discipline, and the constant threat of being bombed by Rhodesian forces, especially in the last years of the war.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁶ *ibid.*

³⁶⁷ Ngwabi Bhebe *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, pp. 105-106.

³⁶⁸ Jocelyn Alexander, Joann McGregor, and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory, One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matebeleland*, p. 143.

Isabel Ncube was at Victory Camp, a holding camp west of Lusaka, with about four thousand other young women. She gave the following account of her experiences.³⁶⁹ The camp served as a holding camp and a refugee camp as well. Before female cadres went to Mkushi for military training and before those going overseas for studies were sent out, they had to pass through Victory Camp where they were vetted. The heavy network of spies, which the Rhodesian government had established, made it necessary for the party to seek thorough knowledge of people who were accepted for training. Those with professional qualifications, teachers, medical personnel, tailors, builders, and carpenters, were given jobs within the camp. A makeshift school was set up in the camp to offer basic primary education.

Life in the camp was tough. Every day at 4:00 am, the young ladies got up for vigorous physical exercises. Later in the day, they would receive political education. Victory Camp had no buildings. Everyone lived in tents. At times food was in short supply but morale was always kept high through singing revolutionary songs and by the propaganda cadres were subjected to. They remained hopeful that they would soon return to a liberated Zimbabwe.³⁷⁰

Nigel Johnson was a social worker at J. Z Moyo Camp II (J.Z) in Solwezi, northwestern Zambia, close to the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo. He gave the following account of his experiences at the camp.³⁷¹ There were about four thousand young men at the camp. Close to the J.Z camp, there was a military training camp for ZIPRA cadres. Most of the young men at J.Z came from Matebeleland, having fled the war by walking into Botswana and were then transported to Zambia by ZAPU.

³⁶⁹ Interview with Isabel Ncube, ZIPRA ex-combatant, Cape Town, 29/07/03.

³⁷⁰ *ibid.*

³⁷¹ Interview with Fr. Nigel Johnson, Social worker at J.Z Moyo Camp II, Bulawayo, 06/04/03.

Everyone in the camp lived in tents. The United Nations Human Rights Commission through the World Lutheran Federation supplied tents, food, and clothing. Rice and beans were the staple diet in the camp. At times food was in short supply for the young men because instead of feeding them, supplies were taken to the military camp nearby. The camp was run like a school, offering primary and secondary education. Singing revolutionary songs was the main source of entertainment in the camp since there were about forty choirs in the camp.

According to Johnson, most of the senior cadres in the camp had been to the Soviet Union and they showed clear signs of Marxist-Leninist influence. A society very close to a socialist community was established at the camp. No one had personal money and no one owned anything valuable. Senior cadres in the camp believed that when the refugees returned home, they would form the vanguard of socialist principles.³⁷²

Paulos Matjaka Nare, the man who was put in charge of education in ZAPU holding camps, pointed out that the main focus of education in the camps was poly-technical. Education with production was encouraged as a way of establishing the basis of a self-reliant post-independence society. Technical subjects such as agriculture, integrated science, metal work, building and leatherwork, were central to the curriculum in holding camps. The systematic conscientization of students against oppressive political systems was also part of the political education taught in the schools. Students were kept occupied to avoid tensions and boredom.³⁷³

The large number of Zimbabweans living in Zambia also provided ground for recruitment. There have been allegations that as ZAPU was restructuring, the recruitment

³⁷² *ibid.*

³⁷³ Paulos Matjaka Nare 'Education and War' in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger (eds.) Society In Zimbabwe's Liberation War, volume 2, pp. 133-134.

exercise included forced abductions. While party officials deny these allegations, the experiences of a young lady who was abducted by ZAPU guerrillas while she was a temporary teacher in rural Matebeleland is evidence of forced recruitment by ZAPU.³⁷⁴

Training in ZIPRA took two forms. Some cadres were trained for guerrilla warfare while others, perhaps a larger number, were trained as conventional soldiers. The guerrillas, in their small groups, had bases along the Botswana border while the conventional soldiers were based in Zambia.³⁷⁵ For Moyo, it was important to train highly competent soldiers since ZAPU's war from the 1970s would concentrate on launching 'quality' engagements rather than 'quantity'. It was not the number of cadres on the ground that mattered but the significance of their targets.³⁷⁶ ZIPRA was going to target strategic points in attacking the government. Seeking to produce quality and highly trained cadres meant that ZAPU could not train cadres in huge numbers. Unlike ZANLA, which concentrated on massive infiltration of guerrillas, most of whom had been given very basic training, ZIPRA's better-trained cadres were produced in smaller numbers at a given time. It must be remembered that Botswana was not as accommodating to nationalist forces as Mozambique. Consequently, while ZANU could recruit large numbers and send them to Mozambique, the Botswana government was willing to accommodate a few ZAPU recruits at a time. This meant that though ZAPU was recruiting and training on a large scale after the second internal crisis, the number of trained cadres would always be limited by external factors.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ This interviewee refused to be named. She also made reference to the incident of pupils from Manama Mission who were forced by ZAPU guerrillas to walk to Botswana to join the struggle.

³⁷⁵ Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin, *Chimurenga The War in Zimbabwe*, p. 92.

³⁷⁶ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

³⁷⁷ Interview with Professor P. Makurane, Academic, Bulawayo.

Moyo was keen to launch a full-scale armed struggle, and that was what the Revolutionary Council was planning. The Soviet Union's revolutionary theories formed the basis of ZIPRA's ideology and training. For ZIPRA, the decisive factor in the armed struggle was going to be a military victory. Consequently, the acquisition of powerful military equipment became important for ZIPRA. The Soviet Union supplied most of the equipment.³⁷⁸

Unlike the first incursions during which ZAPU had maintained its cadres self-reliant, from 1972, there were efforts to politicize civilians in the Wankie area and on the shores of Lake Kariba. ZIPRA had realized the importance of an assurance of support from civilians in fighting a government that had established a wide network of spies and informers.³⁷⁹

The African National Council, 1972:

The banning of African nationalist parties and the arrests of most of the leaders and a number of supporters paralyzed internal African political activity. While ZAPU had already established a number of branches by the time it was banned, ZANU was just beginning to lay structures, in fact, was still unknown in many areas, when the party was banned in 1964.³⁸⁰ ZAPU underground structures did not play a significant role before 1972 other than keeping supporters aware of their leaders and loyal to the party, because of the heavy network of spies and informers the Rhodesian government had set up. The main political activity for ZAPU and ZANU at this time was the war, which, for both parties, was being coordinated by external wings. While armed guerrillas were making

³⁷⁸ Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin *Chimurenga The War in Rhodesia 1965-1980*, p. 76.

³⁷⁹ Kees Maxey *The Fight For Zimbabwe: The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia Since UDL*, pp. 104-155.

³⁸⁰ Interview with Mr. Welshman Mabhena, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

an impact in the country, external leaders remained outside, aware that a presence in Rhodesia meant going to prison. Consequently, their influence on African political activity within Rhodesia was not very significant. Internal branches of both parties suffered from an absence of leadership and political activity.

An Anglo-Rhodesian proposed settlement to the Rhodesian crisis in November 1971 resulted in an attempt at reaching a constitutional agreement that would be put to the Africans in a referendum to test their opinion.³⁸¹ The Anglo-Rhodesian settlement acknowledged that a solution had to be found to end the racial segregation that was prevalent in the country and the hardening of white opinion. Consequently, it was proposed, *inter alia* that a 'responsible government' had to be established in Rhodesia. This 'responsible government' would not be exclusively white but would certainly not amount to granting Africans majority rule. Employment and educational opportunities for Africans were to be improved as part of the new regime.³⁸² While Africans were going to be given a chance to participate in government and while their educational and employment opportunities were going to be improved, the proposed constitutional changes fell short of what African nationalists were asking for by 1971. Majority rule and independence were now being demanded and there was no way that an attempt to appease them by offering a fraction of their demands would be accepted by Africans.

The need to organize African resistance to these Anglo-Rhodesian Constitutional proposals emerged. The absence of viable African political activity within Rhodesia was likely going to result in the Africans failing to present a unified and informed opinion.

³⁸¹ 'The Period of The Armed Struggle' in Nyangoni and Nyandoro Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents, p. 185.

³⁸² 'Anglo-Rhodesian Settlement Proposals, Rhodesian Settlement Forum: Why The Settlement is Vital For Rhodesia,' Salisbury, 21 November 1971, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro (eds.) Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents, pp. 187- 190.

Consequently, the African National Council (ANC) was quickly formed in December 1971, drawing non-partisan allegiance from ZAPU and ZANU supporters.³⁸³ Addressing the 28th session of the OAU Liberation Committee, Nkomo pointed out that the ANC had been formed as a way of rejecting Anglo-Rhodesian Constitutional proposals. A non-partisan leader, Abel Muzorewa, was chosen to lead the unified campaign that became the ANC. Given the extent of the underground structures ZAPU/PCC had already established, the ANC inevitably made use of these contacts to enable total mobilization.³⁸⁴

The outstanding feature of the ANC was its non-partisan character. Even though it profited from making use of ZAPU structures, the other members of the ANC executive were representatives of the broad perspective of African political consciousness. Canaan Banana, Edison Sithole, Eddison Zvobgo, Michael Mawema, Josiah Chinamano, and C.C Ngacebetsha were part of the Executive.³⁸⁵ Mawema, Sithole, and Zvobgo represented ZANU interests within the ANC, while Chinamano, Msipa, and Chadzingwa represented ZAPU. ZANU and ZAPU were thus represented on the ANC Executive even though the overall leadership lay in non-partisan men, Muzorewa and Banana, religious leaders. These were not elected leaders since the ANC Executive was made up of people appointed by their own parties.³⁸⁶

³⁸³ Andre Astrow *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?*, p. 45.

³⁸⁴ Speech made by Cde. Joshua Nkomo, President of ZAPU and Joint Leader of PF at the 28th Session of OAU Liberation Committee, 31 January 1977, in *Zimbabwe Review*, Volume 6, Number 7, July 1977, p. 7-8.

³⁸⁵ 'The Period of Armed Struggle,' in Nyangoni and Nyandoro (eds.) *Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents*, p. 185.

³⁸⁶ Speech made by Cde. Joshua Nkomo, President of ZAPU and Joint Leader ZAPU at the 28th Session of OAU Liberation Committee, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro (eds.) *Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents*, p. 185.

The name ANC was chosen deliberately as a way of reviving ancient loyalties to the struggle. In the formative phases of organized African nationalism in Rhodesia, the ANC had been a popular party that commanded support in the whole country. A technicality which many Africans were not likely going to pick out, but which the Rhodesian government would certainly pick out, was the fact that the group formed in 1971 was called African National Council, not the African National Congress which had been banned in 1959. The choice of the name and the nature of the leadership thus helped in rallying Africans behind the ANC. The mobilization of Africans by the ANC to respond to the Pearce Commission offered an opportunity for the revival of African nationalism within Rhodesia.³⁸⁷

The essence of the ANC's objection to the Anglo-Rhodesian settlement lay in rejecting a settlement that had been draw up without the participation of authentic African nationalist leaders. African nationalists regarded the Anglo-Rhodesian settlement as an attempt to legalize Smith's UDI since the notion of responsible government presented in the settlement did not grant Africans majority rule.³⁸⁸ In 1972, the Pearce Commission set up by the British government to sound out African opinion to the Anglo-Rhodesian settlement proposals heard loud and clear that Africans were not happy with Smith's regime and were thus not going to accept the proposals.³⁸⁹ The unarmed African population managed to defeat the government in rejecting proposals that were aimed at promoting the government's interests.

³⁸⁷ Martin Meredith *The Past is Another Country Rhodesia UDI to Zimbabwe*, pp. 88-103.

³⁸⁸ ANC 'Why ANC Says NO To The Settlement Proposals,' Statement to The Pearce Commission in Salisbury, 3 January 1972, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro (eds.) *Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents*, pp. 210-211.

³⁸⁹ Kees Maxey *The Fight For Zimbabwe: The Armed Conflict in Southern Rhodesia Since UDI*, p. 100.

In successfully campaigning for a 'NO' vote to the Anglo-Rhodesian settlement, the ANC achieved its purpose. It was the first instance of successful collaboration by African nationalists from different parties in the struggle. A common enemy, the Anglo-Rhodesian constitutional proposals, had been identified, and political ambitions by the leaders of the various parties had been set aside. As ZAPU and ZANU were banned, there was no way that they could mobilize support under the banners of their respective parties. Given the situation, a non-partisan collaboration was the only way forward in promoting the interests of African nationalism.

Having achieved its mandate in 1972, the ANC should have disbanded or transformed itself into something else if it was to remain relevant and useful in the struggle. Nkomo claimed to have encouraged Muzorewa to continue spearheading the cause of African nationalism since ZAPU and ZANU were still banned and their top leadership was in prison.³⁹⁰ A revival of African political activity within Rhodesia was necessary to compliment the pressure coming from the war front. A politically active civilian population would support guerrillas, understanding that they were sacrificing their lives for the liberation of the African people in Rhodesia. The revival of African political activity within Rhodesia would also help in countering the network of informers that the Rhodesian government had set up among the civilian population. The ANC filled the gap that had been left by the banning of ZAPU and ZANU. The release of political leaders from detention in 1974 changed the nature of the ANC. The following chapter will discuss, among other things, the manner in which the collaboration established by the ANC disintegrated as political leaders began competing for power.

³⁹⁰ Speech made by Cde. Joshua Nkomo, President of ZAPU and Joint Leader of PF at the 28th Session of the OAU Liberation Committee, 31 January 1977, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents, p. 8.

Chapter Five

The Decisive Phase, 1974-1980:

Introduction:

The return of political leaders from prison in 1974 resulted in struggles and tensions within the ANC. African nationalist leaders expressed an intention to unite in December 1974, but before they could agree on holding a congress for the ANC at which leadership would be elected, Nkomo held his own congress where he was elected leader of the ANC-Zimbabwe. This was essentially Nkomo's attempt to outmaneuver Muzorewa and ZANU in leadership. The 'new' party set up by Nkomo was effectively a revival of ZAPU's internal wing. Muzorewa expelled Nkomo from the ANC while ZANU boycotted the congress called for by Nkomo. Political ambitions and power struggles began crippling the effectiveness of the ANC. ZANU was waiting to participate in the congress once it had stabilized after the assassination of Herbert Chitepo and the instability caused by the Nhari rebellion. ZANU also realized that Nkomo's presence in Rhodesia after his release from prison had resulted in ZAPU officials taking over most of the leadership positions in the ANC since the ANC had been built largely on ZAPU's internal structures.³⁹¹

The failure of the political union attempted under the ANC saw another bid to unite nationalist military wings. The Frontline States encouraged the formation of the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA); bringing together cadres from ZAPU and ZANU under a joint military leadership. There were inherent contradictions within ZIPA, stemming from the different training backgrounds and different political ideologies that the two parties had. Consequently, putting cadres from the two parties together was a

³⁹¹ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

‘time bomb.’³⁹² Mistrust and tension among cadres within ZIPA was deepened by Nkomo’s negotiations with Smith in 1975. The ‘unfinished businesses from the 1963 tension between ZAPU and ZANU took a new shape as cadres fought each other in ZIPA. ZANLA cadres at Mgagao in Tanzania killed many ZIPRA cadres.’³⁹³

The establishment of ZIPA meant that ZIPRA cadres had to move from their camps in Zambia and join ZANLA cadres in Tanzania and Mozambique. This move gave ZANU a territorial advantage over ZAPU since ZAPU’s headquarters was in Lusaka. The insecurity that ZAPU felt with the arrangements was reflected in the fact that ZIPRA did not send all its cadres to ZIPA. Most ZIPRA cadres were kept in camps in Lusaka.³⁹⁴

Strategic targets and not the quantity of attacks or the number of cadres infiltrated determined ZIPRA’s approach to fighting in the decisive phase of the struggle. ZAPU had infiltrated cadres in very large groups during the first phase, most of who were either killed or arrested in encounters with government security forces. During the decisive phase, ZAPU infiltrated cadres in small groups, having more cadres outside the country than inside at the end of the war.³⁹⁵ Critics have claimed that since the bulk of ZIPRA cadres were out of the country at the time of ceasefire, ZAPU did not make a significant contribution to the armed struggle. However, when one considers some of ZIPRA’s significant targets, the impact of ZAPU’s participation in the struggle is acknowledged. ZIPRA made a huge impact to the armed struggle by bringing down two Air Rhodesia Viscount Passenger planes. Attacks on fuel reserves in Salisbury were a sign that ZIPRA

³⁹² Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA’s chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

³⁹³ *ibid.*

³⁹⁴ *ibid.*

³⁹⁵ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU’s Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

was ready to take the war into the backyard of the white community, while the heat-seeking missiles that ZIPRA began to use, brought fear to the white suburbs. These missiles were supplied by the Soviet Union but ZIPRA officials kept the source of the weapons secret.³⁹⁶

During the final phase of the war, ZIPRA came up with a detailed military plan aimed at giving the Rhodesian government a decisive blow. 'The Turning Point' was ZIPRA's strategy to end the war, after it realized that the suffering of the African people could not be removed by verbal agreement only.³⁹⁷ ZIPRA had resolved to end the war through the barrel of the gun. Ultimately, the agreement at Lancaster House pre-empted the execution of 'The Turning Point'. While most cadres were waiting for the order to advance, political leaders were negotiating a peaceful settlement. Though the plan was never executed, it was a source of pressure on the Rhodesian government since the CIO was aware of it.³⁹⁸

By the beginning of 1977, ZIPA had collapsed and ZIPRA cadres had all returned to Zambia. Another initiative by the Frontline States emerged. Having failed with military collaboration, there was another attempt at political collaboration. This was the time that Chikerema, Muzorewa and Sithole were trying to establish an internal settlement with Smith. The Patriotic Front (PF) was set up on October 9 1976 as a way of uniting African opposition to minority rule.³⁹⁹ What ZIPA and the JMC had failed to achieve, the PF managed to achieve. At the Geneva talks and during the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference, ZAPU and ZANU were able to speak with one voice. ZAPU

³⁹⁶ Joshua Nkomo *The Story of My Life*, p. 173.

³⁹⁷ ZAPU, 'The Turning Point' 3 April 1979, REF Number RCD/1/79, National Archives, Harare, GEN-P/NKO, Acc. 39835.

³⁹⁸ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

³⁹⁹ Henrick Ellert *The Rhodesian Front War Counter Insurgency and Guerrilla Warfare 1962-1980*, p. 39.

and ZANU eventually collaborated on a political front to negotiate the independence of the Zimbabwe. While the impact of the armed struggle should not be overlooked, it is important to remember that the independence of Zimbabwe was not attained through a military victory. A negotiated settlement brought independence to Zimbabwe. The intensity of the war contributed to the pressure experienced by the Rhodesian government. Britain and America added to this pressure after taking an interest in the Rhodesian crisis as a way of blocking the influence of the Soviet Union on Rhodesia.⁴⁰⁰ Frontline States and Commonwealth Heads of State also played their part in encouraging Britain to settle the Rhodesian crisis. Having achieved its purpose at Lancaster House, the PF was dissolved, much to the annoyance of Nkomo who had regarded it as a ticket to power. The PF was a 'marriage of convenience,' set up to unite ZAPU and ZANU in negotiating with the Rhodesian government.⁴⁰¹ Once the path to independence was set out, there was no more need for the PF because it was time for the nationalists to compete for votes.

The African National Council, (Zimbabwe) (ANC (Z)):

International and regional pressures, the impact of the changing situation in Mozambique, pressure coming from the Frontline States and the intensification of the armed struggle resulted in the release of nationalist leaders from detention in 1974.⁴⁰² John Vorster, South Africa's Prime Minister, put pressure on Smith to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the nationalists, while Frontline States were putting pressure on the nationalists to negotiate. This was the period of the 'Détente' exercise, which was an

⁴⁰⁰ Mordechai Tamarkin *The Making of Zimbabwe*, pp. 239-240.

⁴⁰¹ Masipula Sithole *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle*, pp. 166-168.

⁴⁰² ZAPU, 'The Turning Point' 3 April 1979, REF Number RDC/179, National Archives, Harare, GEN-P/NKO, Acc. 39835.

attempt by Vorster to establish a peaceful solution to the Rhodesian crisis. Vorster worked to ensure that Smith released political prisoners before engaging them in talks. The ban on ZAPU and ZANU would be lifted before the holding of a Constitutional Conference.⁴⁰³ The release of these political leaders changed the nature of the ANC. While it had emerged as a non-partisan body, unifying African opposition to the government, African nationalists were going to compete for control of the ANC, embracing it as a passage to power. The Zimbabwe Declaration of Unity, drawn up in Lusaka on 7 December 1974 was an attempt to transform the ANC into a political front that would unite African opposition to the minority regime. Leaders from ZAPU, ZANU, FROLIZI and the ANC agreed to unite under the banner of the ANC. Each party would appoint three representatives to the ANC executive. The Executive would then prepare for the holding of a congress within four months from the time of the signing of the Declaration of Unity to enable the transfer of power to an elected leadership. Meanwhile, Muzorewa was to continue leading the ANC until the holding of the congress.⁴⁰⁴ ZAPU, ZANU, FROLIZI and the ANC were essentially agreeing to unite and form a new party, the ANC, which would continue the struggle for majority rule in Rhodesia.⁴⁰⁵ African political leaders who had sought to depose the Rhodesian government were agreeing to come together and launch combined military and political offensives. These African nationalists were aware that they had to compete for the leadership of the ANC.

Prior to the holding of the ANC congress, ZAPU was beginning to feel tension resulting from the release of its political detainees. A clear division emerged between

⁴⁰³ Mordechai Tamarkin *The Making of Zimbabwe* pp. 26-28.

⁴⁰⁴ 'Zimbabwe Declaration of Unity, Lusaka, 7 December 1974,' in Nyangoni and Nyandoro, (eds.) *Zimbabwe Independence Movements. Select Documents*, p. 295.

⁴⁰⁵ 'Salisbury Declaration' 11 December 1974, *ibid.* p. 296.

militants and centralists. Militants comprised the party's leadership in exile, the people who had coordinated ZAPU's war, while centralists consisted of the released political detainees, a number of who had remained in Rhodesia with Nkomo, following the collapse of the Victoria Falls Bridge talks.⁴⁰⁶ While militants were keen to continue the armed struggle, centralists were more inclined towards talks. The presence of centralists within the country after their release from prison played an essential role in the revival of ZAPU activities within Rhodesia.⁴⁰⁷

In November 1974 ZANU experienced a mutiny. Thomas Nhari led a group of ZANLA cadres from the battlefield and tried to seize the military leadership of the party. The ZANLA High Command managed to recapture Chifombo camp in Mozambique, where Nhari's group was based, in January 1975. Nhari and a number of his supporters were executed.⁴⁰⁸ Chitepo, the leader of ZANU, was assassinated in Lusaka in March 1975. The Zambian government arrested most of the party's leadership in Zambia, accusing them of assassinating Chitepo.⁴⁰⁹ Consequently, ZANU felt that it was not yet ready for the holding of the ANC congress because of its internal crisis, but Nkomo pushed for it. Muzorewa realized that ZAPU structures had saturated the ANC such that in voting, ZAPU had an advantage. Consequently, he suggested the postponement of the congress, but Nkomo did not accept the idea. There were fears among the nationalists that Smith was manipulating Nkomo into sidelining the other members of the ANC in seeking an internal settlement. Nkomo met with Smith at the latter's house and it was

⁴⁰⁶ African nationalists held talks with Smith on 25 August 1975 at the Victoria Falls Bridge. John Vorster, South African Prime Minister, and Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's President, facilitated the talks. The talks collapsed because of Smith's threat to arrest exiled nationalists once they came to Rhodesia, where the talks were supposed to be concluded. Most of the ANC leaders went into exile after the collapse of the talks.

⁴⁰⁷ Masipula Sithole *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle*, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁰⁸ *ibid.* pp. 74-77.

⁴⁰⁹ R. Kent Rasmussen and Steven C. Rubert *Historical Dictionary of Zimbabwe*, p. 395

suggested that Nkomo should abandon ZANU, and separate from Muzorewa by calling for a congress to discuss the leadership of the ANC. These allegations and the secret movements Nkomo was involved in resulted in his expulsion from the ANC by Muzorewa.⁴¹⁰ Unity had been achieved in the absence of most senior nationalist leaders. Now that they were present and the ANC had a solid following within the country since it was the only party for Africans with a legal existence at the time, politicians were trying to benefit from the possibility of commanding a large following in the country. In September 1975, it was agreed by African nationalists and the Frontline States that the ANC should postpone its congress to avoid dividing the people since there were clear signs of instability of nationalist structures.⁴¹¹

Mocking his expulsion by Muzorewa and referring to him as a leader who had not been elected to his post and thus had no power to expel him, Nkomo went ahead and held a congress that was boycotted by ZANU, FROLIZI, and the ANC. On September 26-27, 1975, a congress was held, electing new leadership and resulting in the birth of the African National Council, (Zimbabwe) (ANC (Z)). Nkomo was elected President, Chinamano became Vice President, Moyo was elected second Vice President, Msika became General Secretary, with Amon Jirira as Treasurer and Samuel Munodawafa was elected National Chairman.⁴¹² The elected leadership of the ANC (Z) was essentially ZAPU. While Nkomo held the congress claiming to be following up on the Zimbabwe Declaration of Unity, participants at the congress were not representative of the signatories of the Zimbabwe Declaration of Unity. The absence of the other signatories to the declaration at the congress meant that Nkomo could not claim to be fulfilling the

⁴¹⁰ Henrick Ellert The Rhodesian Front War, Counter-Insurgency and Guerrilla Warfare, p. 38.

⁴¹¹ *ibid.*

⁴¹² Joshua Nkomo The Story of My Life, p. 156.

agreement reached in Lusaka. The unrepresentative nature of the congress made Nkomo's election unconstitutional. According to Gordon Chavhunduka, Nkomo wanted to ensure that he secured the leadership of the ANC for himself by holding a Congress after the nationalists and the leaders of the Frontline states had agreed to postpone it.⁴¹³ Considering that ZAPU was still banned in Rhodesia, the creation of the ANC (Z) gave Nkomo an opportunity to carry out political activities for ZAPU on a legal platform and free from other nationalists whose strategies he did not approve of.

Nkomo's faction justified its actions by claiming that the ANC had benefited from structures ZAPU had set up to support the struggle. Consequently, ZAPU had emerged as the main power base for the ANC 'and as the decisive power in the total rejection, through the Pearce Commission, of the Smith-Douglas Home fraudulent constitution in 1972.' Nkomo was thus claiming justification for his action by arguing that his party was the power behind the ANC.⁴¹⁴ Nkomo's congress broke down the future prospects of a united political front. It was competition time again for nationalist leaders as attempts to outdo each other resumed. The assumption that the identification of a common enemy would unite African nationalists was proved false. While ZANU continued the armed struggle, Nkomo concentrated on reviving ZAPU branches under the disguise of the ANC (Z).⁴¹⁵

⁴¹³ African National Council, 'Speech By Dr. Gordon Chavhunduka, Secretary General, London, 7 February 1976, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro, (eds.) Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents, pp. 378-379.

⁴¹⁴ The Nkomo Faction View 'Facts About The ANC,' in Nyangoni and Nyandoro, (eds.) Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents, p. 345.

⁴¹⁵ Masipula Sithole Struggles within The Struggle, p. 143.

The Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA):

In 1974, the OAU insisted on the establishment of joint training of Rhodesian nationalist cadres. Joint training camps were established at Morogoro and Mgagao, Tanzania, in 1976. However, ZAPU maintained separate training camps in Zambia and Angola. The concept of setting up collaboration on the military front was not new to the nationalists. The Zimbabwe People's Army was essentially a revival of the idea that had been mooted when the JMC was first talked about in 1967.⁴¹⁶ A number of other factors also contributed to the formation of ZIPA. There was a general feeling among military leaders from ZAPU and ZANU to get together and launch a combined offensive. Moyo from ZAPU and Tongogara from ZANU had had talks on the possibility of launching a combined military offensive. ZANU claims to have invited ZAPU into launching the combined offensive.⁴¹⁷ Contrary to ZANU's claim for the initiative in the setting up of ZIPA, Bhebe makes reference to the fact that ZAPU and ZANU military wings were forced by Samora Machel and other Frontline States leaders to set up a partnership.⁴¹⁸

The manner in which ZIPA was set up had a huge impact on the way it featured as a fighting force. Dabengwa pointed out that ZAPU was forced by the OAU's Liberation Committee to participate in the formation of ZIPA. ZAPU weapons in Tanzania were held back by the Liberation Committee and ZAPU was told that the weapons would be released only after ZIPRA and ZANLA had united. ZIPRA's participation in the establishment of ZIPA was consequently a way through which ZIPRA was securing the release of its weapons. There was unwillingness from ZIPRA to participate in ZIPA because ZANLA was not functioning well at the time ZIPA was

⁴¹⁶ Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin *Chimurenga The War in Rhodesia 1965-1980*, p. 72.

⁴¹⁷ David Martin and Phyllis Johnson *The Struggle For Zimbabwe*, pp. 217-219.

⁴¹⁸ Ngwabi Bhebe *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, p. 55.

being formed. Tongogara, ZANLA's commander and a number of other ZANU leaders were in prison in Zambia, following the assassination of Chitepo.⁴¹⁹ ZANU was not yet settled since the Nhari rebellion. ZIPRA was thus not willing to join forces with a military wing which was having problems and which did not have political leaders easily accessible, but pressure from the Frontline States prevailed.

From November 1975 to January 1977, ZIPA had its brief existence. Nine representatives from ZAPU and nine from ZANU made up the coordinating team.⁴²⁰ Nhongo from ZANLA was overall in charge of the combined offensive with Mangena, from ZIPRA, as his deputy. According to ZANLA sources, though ZANLA had more trained cadres than ZIPRA at the time, ZANLA agreed to give ZIPRA equal representation on ZIPA's leadership, but refused ZIPRA's suggestion that Mangena should be commander in chief. Instead, ZANLA secured all the key posts, giving them the decisive power within ZIPA.⁴²¹ The partnership that was set up in ZIPA thus had inherent contradictions. ZIPRA had been clear about not wanting to participate in the combined offensive and when forced to participate, it sought influential positions that ZANLA would not let go of. Even though there was talk of a combined force since the cadres were going to infiltrate under one command structure and were going to train together, there was evidence of underlying forces that sought partisan advantages. The manner in which ZANLA sought the influential positions within ZIPA showed a desire to promote the interests of ZANU only.

⁴¹⁹ Dumiso Dabengwa 'ZIPRA in the Zimbabwe War of National Liberation,' in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, p. 33.

⁴²⁰ David Moore 'The Zimbabwe People's Army: Strategic Innovation or More of the Same? In N. Bhebe and T. Ranger (eds.) *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, p. 74.

⁴²¹ David and Phyllis Johnson *The Struggle For Zimbabwe*, p. 222.

Given the dynamics surrounding the formation of ZIPA and its command structure, Bhebe argued that as ZIPRA cadres went into ZIPA their commanders in ZIPRA instructed them to desert once they got into Rhodesia and recruit cadres for ZIPRA before returning to Lusaka.⁴²² If ZIPRA had joined ZIPA as a way of securing the release of weapons that the OAU's Liberation Committee was holding in Tanzania, then it is plausible to accept the possibility that ZIPRA commanders instructed their cadres to defect. Interviews with people who were directly involved with ZIPRA during the formation of ZIPA challenge Bhebe's claim. Ex-combatant Baleni was in charge of one of the ZIPRA groups that went to Mozambique to be part of ZIPA. He claims that they went to join ZIPA with no instruction to desert.⁴²³ Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu also denies the claim put forward by Bhebe. According to Ndlovu, ZIPRA took the arrangements for the establishment seriously. Instead, it was ZANLA that was not fully committed to ZIPA. Ndlovu said that during the time of ZIPA, ZANLA cadres had a slogan that said '*Tamba wakachenjera*,' (be careful in whatever you do.) This slogan summarized ZANLA's approach to ZIPA. ZANLA cadres had to be careful so as not to be caught napping. But whom did ZANLA cadres have to watch against? Ndlovu argues that ZANLA cadres were instructed to deliberately provoke and attack ZIPRA cadres. They had to guard against ZIPRA's prominence in the struggle.⁴²⁴

While it may not be easy to get to the bottom of the truth about the levels of commitment to ZIPA, the flow of events can help in drawing conclusions. The Frontline States forced ZIPRA into ZIPA and ZIPRA did not send all its cadres to ZIPA camps.⁴²⁵

⁴²² Ngwabi Bhebe *The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe*, p. 64.

⁴²³ Interview with Mr. Baleni, ZIPRA ex-combatant, Bulawayo.

⁴²⁴ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

⁴²⁵ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

Bearing in mind the territorial challenge that ZIPRA was facing, one should not be surprised that some ZIPRA cadres ended up defecting from ZIPA. Tanzania and Mozambique, which had bases and training camps for ZIPA, were countries in which ZANLA had well-established bases. By leaving Zambia, ZIPRA cadres were going into ZANLA territory. Moreover, infiltration into Rhodesia from Mozambique was going to be through Shona speaking areas. Since ZIPRA cadres had been recruited mainly from Ndebele speaking areas, it is possible that some of them found themselves uncomfortable and insecure among Shona speaking civilians who were not members of their party. Some ZIPRA cadres found the environment in which they had to operate insecure and so they defected. The defections by such cadres, according to Baleni and Ndlovu, were not part of ZIPRA's policy but were decisions made by individual cadres. Baleni and Ndlovu were interviewed long after the end of the war. It is possible that they refused to confirm the fact that ZIPRA cadres were instructed to defect because they wanted to paint a positive picture of ZAPU's contribution to the struggle.

The views held by political leaders from ZAPU and ZANU shed an interesting light on the manner in which the parties understood the idea behind ZIPA. Aware that ZIPA was being dominated by ZANLA, Nkomo denounced it as an imposition by neighbouring states on nationalist movements in Rhodesia.⁴²⁶ It was not surprising that while cadres were gathering in camps to form ZIPA in 1976, Nkomo was engaging in talks with Smith. A serious commitment to ZIPA by ZIPRA would have ended up contradicting the strategy that the leader of their party had adopted. These talks made ZIPA impossible to manage. There was no way that cadres from ZAPU could be trusted by ZANLA cadres while Nkomo 'was dinning with the enemy.' Even though ZIPRA

⁴²⁶ Mordechai Tamarkin *The Making of Zimbabwe* p. 120.

cadres were not in favour of Nkomo's talks with Smith, ZANLA did not make a distinction between Nkomo's personal strategy and the strategy his cadres were inclined towards.⁴²⁷ A detailed discussion of the talks follows later in this chapter.

In a memorandum sent to ZANLA guerrillas on 15 April 1976, Mugabe suggested that ZANLA's war efforts were to be glorified while Nkomo was denounced as counter-revolutionary. For Mugabe, even though ZANLA and ZIPRA engaged in battles together, there could not be any equality between them since ZANLA had a numerical advantage over ZIPRA.⁴²⁸ The failure of political leaders to share a common perspective on ZIPA made the chances of establishing proper unity between them very slim. ZIPA suffered from a lack of common vision.

On 7 April 1976, Baleni arrived in Chimoio leading a group of ZIPRA cadres who were to become part of ZIPA. Baleni's group arrived with their kitbags and while they were waiting to be taken to their lodgings in the camp, ZANLA organized a group of young cadres who marched in front of the ZIPRA cadres, possibly with the intention of intimidating them. ZANLA cadres then searched ZIPRA cadres. Baleni's two pistols were confiscated during the searching and he was locked up and beaten up for the whole night, together with the ZIPRA cadres he had come with.⁴²⁹ The experience of Baleni's group is just one among many. At Mgagao and Kingolwira camps, fighting broke out between ZANLA and ZIPRA cadres, resulting in the deaths of a number of ZIPRA cadres.⁴³⁰ The safety of ZIPRA cadres within ZIPA was not to be taken for granted.

⁴²⁷ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

⁴²⁸ Mordechai Tamarkin *The Making of Zimbabwe* p. 119.

⁴²⁹ Interview with Mr. Baleni, ZIPRA ex-combatant, Bulawayo.

⁴³⁰ David Martin and Phyllis Johnson *The Struggle For Zimbabwe*, p. 243.

Baleni raised two points to explain the source of the tension which cadres were experiencing. ZAPU and ZANU had different approaches to the struggle. ZANLA had adopted a Maoist ideology that was rooted in mass mobilization. Cadres did not have to be highly trained for battle then since large numbers rather than quality of training mattered. For ZIPRA, proper training of cadres was important since ZIPRA's strategy regarded military victory as determining the outcome of the war. ZAPU was thus giving its cadres longer training than ZANU. The failure by commanders of ZIPA to reach an agreement on which strategy to use caused tension among the cadres as ZIPRA cadres resisted using ZANLA's strategy while ZANLA cadres believed that their strategy was the best of the two.

It had been assumed by Frontline States that since Nhongo and Mangena shared the common background of having been trained by ZAPU, they would easily unite the cadres from their parties. This was an incorrect assumption because Nhongo and Mangena now belonged to rival parties that were each seeking to be prominent in the struggle. The two parties also differed on the political education they were exposing their cadres to. ZIPRA cadres regarded ZANLA's strategy of infiltrating and then holding *pungwes* with villagers (night vigil meetings) as suicidal since Rhodesian security forces could easily ambush these gatherings, killing many villagers and cadres. For ZIPRA, cadres had to come in and establish contacts gently with the civilian population. The failure of the coordinating team to agree on the ideology and the political approach to adopt divided the cadres on party lines. ZIPRA commanders were surprised that ZANLA deployed people who were not properly trained. Cadres who had trained using sticks as guns were given proper guns on the day they were being deployed. Such a move was

regarded as dangerous by ZIPRA since a number of ZANU cadres had to get used to their weapons while in the process of defending themselves. Lives were lost because of deploying people not yet used to firearms.⁴³¹

ZIPA also fell apart because of the tensions that were inherent due to the fact that by belonging to different parties, cadres had learnt the history of each party. ZIPRA cadres regarded members of ZANU as 'dissidents' who had broken away from the 'mother' party while ZANLA cadres were aware that ZAPU's *Zhanda* (youths) had hunted down and killed members of ZANU between 1963 and 1964. The competition for power that had haunted political leaders in the split in 1963 continued to haunt the militants from ZIPRA and ZANLA.⁴³² The partnership that brought ZIPRA and ZANLA together did not dissolve political loyalties. It was inevitable that political tensions would resurface in ZIPA.

ZIPRA's limited deployment in ZIPA contributed to tension among cadres. ZIPRA sent two hundred cadres only to ZIPA and only one hundred of these crossed into Rhodesia. Many were instructed to desert once they arrived in Rhodesia.⁴³³ At the launch of ZIPA offensives, only fifteen percent of ZIPA cadres belonged to ZAPU.⁴³⁴ Such a numerical imbalance made it unrealistic to talk about a combined military campaign among the cadres on the battlefield. At any given time during ZIPA offensives, ZANLA always felt that it was committing more men to the struggle than ZIPRA and hence, a perpetuation of the idea that ZANLA was doing most of the fighting.

⁴³¹ Interview with Mr. Baleni, ZIPRA ex-combatant, Bulawayo.

⁴³² Ngwabi Bhebe The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, p. 62.

⁴³³ Andre Astrow Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way? p. 98.

⁴³⁴ Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin Chimurenga The War in Rhodesia 1965-1980, p. 99.

According to Nkomo, the collapse of ZIPA can be explained partially by the attempt by some elements within the military command of ZIPA to establish a new political leadership from among the ZIPA leadership.⁴³⁵ The reason given by Nkomo gets support from Mangena's withdrawal of ZIPRA troops from ZIPA, arguing that while his contingent had maintained loyalty to ZAPU leadership, some ZANLA cadres were beginning to regard ZIPA as an independent entity.⁴³⁶ It must be remembered that most ZANU leaders were in prison in Zambia when ZIPA was established. It is not surprising then that the ZANLA cadres who were holding key positions in ZIPA began regarding themselves as a separate entity from ZANU. The absence of political unity between the parties, coupled with the release of ZANLA leaders who had been imprisoned following the assassination of Chitepo, resulted in leadership problems within ZIPA. The released cadres came out of prison and sought to establish control over ZIPA resulting in clashes with the cadres who had been in charge.⁴³⁷

The Impact of ZIPA:

While the idea of launching a combined military offensive was brilliant, there was no way that ZIPA would make a huge impact on the battlefield because of the problems that were deep within the partnership. An army in which cadres do not trust each other cannot function effectively. Though unity was the desired goal in ZIPA, it was never achieved because of events within and outside ZIPA. In 1975 when Nkomo, Muzorewa, and Sithole visited a ZIPA training camp at Mgagao and explained to the cadres plans for a constitutional conference and the significance of the ANC, some ZANLA cadres

⁴³⁵ Joshua Nkomo 'We are Preparing to Run a Country,' in Liberation Support Movement (eds.) *Zimbabwe The Final Advance*, (Oakland: LMS Information Centre,) 1978, p. 17.

⁴³⁶ Andre Astrow *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?* p. 99.

⁴³⁷ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

responded by issuing the Mgagao Manifesto in which they denounced Nkomo, Muzorewa, Sithole and Chikerema as sellouts.⁴³⁸ These cadres saw no value in talking to the enemy, the Rhodesian government, instead of fighting. There was no way that ZIPRA cadres would stand by and watch their leader being denounced as a sellout.

Baleni suggests that ZIPA contributed negatively to ZIPRA's engagement in the armed struggle. ZIPRA operations were slowed down as some cadres were sent to Mozambique and Tanzania to train with ZANLA. The establishment of ZIPA disturbed the focus of cadres as tensions and mistrust within ZIPA meant that cadres had to be on the lookout for the enemy within and the enemy outside. A number of ZIPRA cadres who crossed into Rhodesia as part of ZIPA were eliminated, not by Rhodesian security forces, but by ZANLA. Clashes at Mgagao resulted in the death of a number of ZIPRA cadres even before they got to the battlefield.⁴³⁹

David Moore offers a different analysis of the impact of ZIPA. Focusing on the heavy counter-insurgency by the Rhodesian army, he points out that some elements in ZIPA regarded that as a mark of the effectiveness of their offensives. The setting up of protected villages and the massive call-ups by the Rhodesian army were evidence of the impact of ZIPA on the enemy.⁴⁴⁰ While it is true that the Rhodesian government would panic at the establishment of a military alliance between ZIPRA and ZANLA, the events on the ground do not agree with the glorious analysis of ZIPA's impact presented by Moore. According to Dabengwa, the partnership was a complete failure. ZIPRA had never wanted to be part of it, hence the holding back of most of its cadres in Zambia and

⁴³⁸ Henrick Ellert *The Rhodesian Front War Counter-insurgency ad Guerrilla Warfare*, p. 37.

⁴³⁹ Interview with Mr. Baleni, ZIPRA ex-combatant, Bulawayo.

⁴⁴⁰ David Moore 'The Zimbabwe People's Army: Strategic Innovation or More of The Same?' in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, p. 80.

Angola.⁴⁴¹ With the collapse of ZIPA, military collaboration between ZIPRA and ZANLA failed again.

ZIPRA Military Engagements From 1975:

Up to 1975, ZAPU's military activities remained on a small scale. Small numbers of guerrillas were infiltrated for acts of sabotage and to recruit cadres for training. Having learnt the dangers of attempting direct confrontation with the Rhodesia army, ZIPRA tended to avoid direct confrontations, opting rather for sabotage of strategic points and the use of landmines as the main strategy.

As nationalist cadres established new operational areas, Rhodesian security forces found themselves stretched. Whereas in the beginning of the armed struggle it had been fairly easy for the Rhodesian forces to guard against infiltration across the Zambezi River, ZANU's opening of the northeastern frontier from 1972 and the opening by ZIPRA of the southwestern frontier along the Botswana border in 1975 stretched the manpower available to the Rhodesian security forces. Through stretching the Rhodesian army, guerrillas managed to disperse government security forces.⁴⁴²

Most ZIPRA guerrillas were deployed in Matebeleland, Midlands and Mashonaland West regions because of the location of their rear bases in Zambia. Bases had to be close to operational areas to ensure easy access to supplies and manpower.⁴⁴³ Since ZIPRA had recruited mainly from these regions, it only made sense for ZIPRA cadres to return and fight in areas where people knew them and would thus easily support them. ZIPRA had four operational zones. In Matebeleland, there were ZIPRA cadres in

⁴⁴¹ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

⁴⁴² Thomas Arbuckle 'Rhodesian Bush War Strategies and Tactics: An Assessment' Document at National Archives, Harare, GEN-P/ARB, Acc. 34011, p. 31.

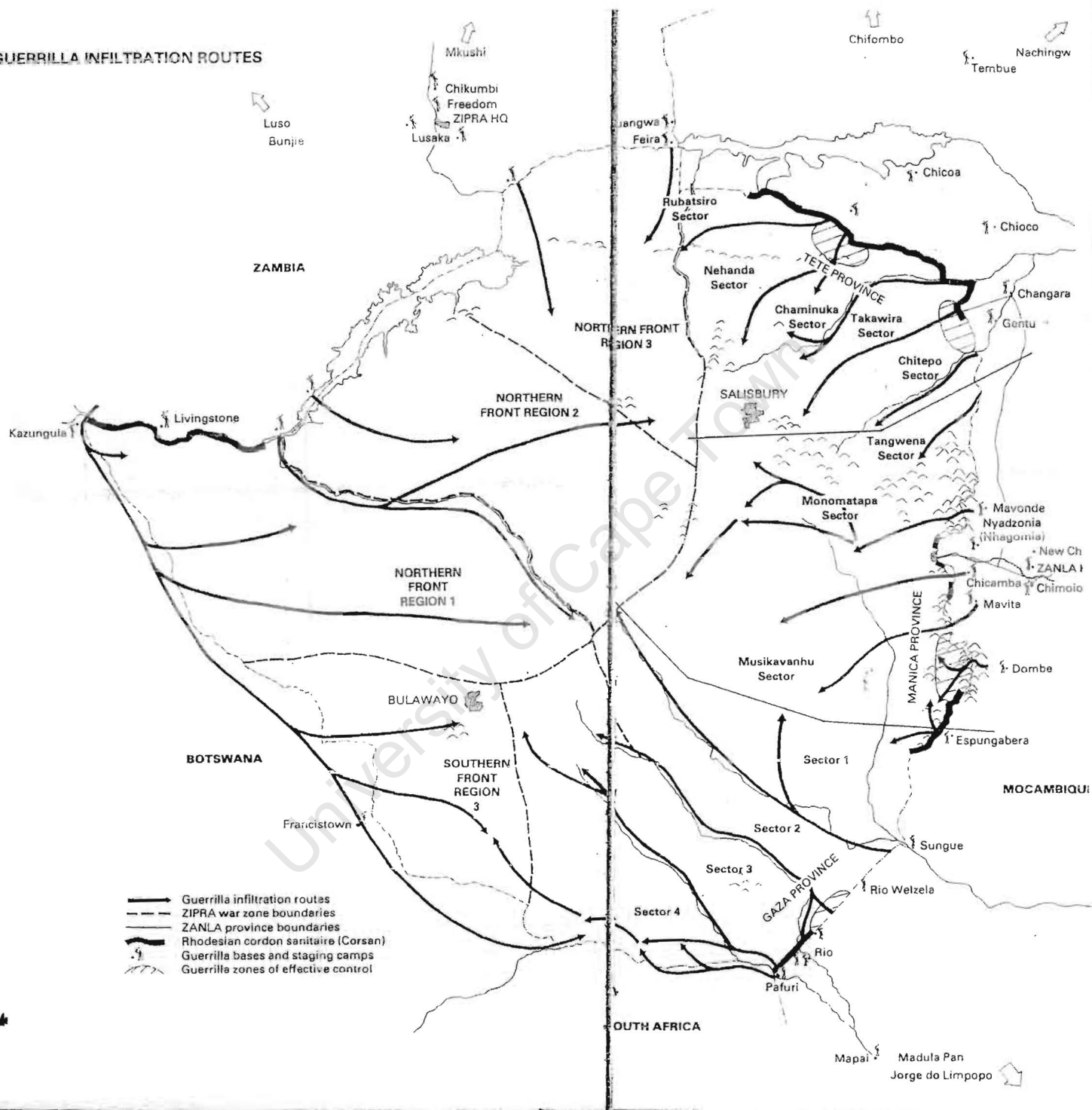
⁴⁴³ Jimmy Z Moyo 'The Development of The Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) Strategy' BA (Hons.) Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1984, p. 14.

the north and the south operational areas, and then there was the Hurungwe Tribal Trust Land operational area, north of central Rhodesia; followed by the zone towards Botswana's border, the area from Belingwe to Villa Salazar.⁴⁴⁴ The map that follows, taken from Moorcraft and McLaughlin's book, illustrates guerrilla infiltration routes.⁴⁴⁵ One sees the manner in which ZIPRA cadres made their way from their headquarters in Chikumbi, Zambia, into Rhodesia. Before 1977, there was no major crossing through Lake Kariba because ZIPRA did not have speedboats. The small canoes that were being used to cross the Zambezi River were not suitable for crossing the lake. ZIPRA operational areas are also indicated on the map. The ZANLA side is the only one with zones of effective control. While ZIPRA was infiltrating, their cadres came in such small numbers, making the establishment of zones of effective control was difficult.

⁴⁴⁴ Paul Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin Chimurenga The War in Rhodesia 1965-1980, p. 92.

⁴⁴⁵ *ibid.* pp. 74 -75.

GUERRILLA INFILTRATION ROUTES



ZIPRA cadres had to gain the trust and support of civilians as they infiltrated in small numbers. Unlike ZANLA, which politicized the masses and set up party structures as its cadres were infiltrating, it was enough for ZIPRA cadres to introduce themselves to civilians as 'Nkomo's boys.' Nkomo remained the respected leader on the minds of ZAPU supporters despite the banning of the party. ZIPRA cadres went into some areas with a list of names of party leaders, contacts having already been established in the period of the first incursions. In 1976, large groups of guerrillas arrived in Nkayi and Lupane areas. The arrival of these cadres helped in reviving party structures that had gone underground. Local party branches had to meet the logistical and some material requirements of the cadres.⁴⁴⁶

Nkayi and Lupane districts were located in the middle of ZIPRA's northern front, falling under the second of three divisions. The northern front was the passage through which the bulk of ZIPRA cadres entered Rhodesia. Most ZIPRA cadres were deployed in this region. ZIPRA's first liberated zones were in the northern front. Nicholas Nkomo, the deputy commander of the northern front zone code marked areas in the region to indicate the level of ZIPRA presence and influence. Green areas were semi-liberated areas, areas in which Rhodesian soldiers could pass through but without maintaining a presence. ZIPRA cadres were free to move around these areas. Yellow zones were contested areas, while red zones were under Rhodesian control.⁴⁴⁷ Nkomo says that in 1976, Lupane and Nkayi were largely under Rhodesian control but by 1977, there was a gradual transition as ZIPRA established control over Nkayi and Lupane. ZIPRA cadres restricted encounters with the enemy to yellow zones as a way of avoiding

⁴⁴⁶ J. Alexander, J. McGregor, & T. Ranger, *Violence and Memory, One Hundred Years in The 'Dark Forests' of Matebeleland* pp. 160-161.

⁴⁴⁷ *ibid.* p. 141.

reprisals on civilians in the green zones. As communications within ZIPRA improved with the use of radio communication and with the drawing up of the 'Turning Point,' Nkomo was able to maintain regular contact with the Headquarters in Lusaka.⁴⁴⁸

According to a combatant's diary for May to September 1976, on May 5 1976, ZIPRA cadres in the Plumtree area blew up the railway line linking Rhodesia and South Africa. Railway services between Rhodesia and South Africa were disrupted. Being a landlocked country and facing economic sanctions, Rhodesia's economy depended a lot on trade with South Africa. Disruption of railway services between Rhodesia and South Africa affected the Rhodesian economy severely. On 13 May, three enemy boats and engines used in patrolling the Zambezi River were captured. Since ZIPRA cadres were infiltrating mainly from Zambia, the ability to weaken the capacity of the enemy to patrol the Zambezi River was a welcome development for ZIPRA. On July 28, the enemy's base at Matetsi was attacked by ZIPRA cadres who only withdrew after the arrival of the Rhodesian Air Force to reinforce the Rhodesian security forces that were under siege. ZIPRA commandos bombed Woolworths Departmental Store in Bulawayo on September 18. By launching this attack, ZIPRA showed its ability to take the war into the enemy's backyard, the urban areas. The white community came to realize that the war was not something happening out in rural areas only. They too could fall victim to the advancing ZIPRA forces.⁴⁴⁹

These entries show that ZIPRA was fighting in 1976, but operating mainly as a guerrilla group that was launching sabotage attacks, especially on the railway line, an easy way of sabotaging the economy of the landlocked Rhodesia.

⁴⁴⁸ *ibid.* pp. 142-143.

⁴⁴⁹ Harold P. Ndlovu 'ZIPRA Combat Diary,' (ANC Zimbabwe: London Branch) May 1976-December 1976, National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare, GEN-P/AFR, Acc. 38904.

Bhebe quotes Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence who said that by 1976, ZAPU had sent people 'to train as pilots, aircraft technicians, tank drivers, and tank mechanics.' ZAPU had also acquired sophisticated military equipment from the Soviet Union.⁴⁵⁰ These pilots and tank drivers were to play an essential role in ZIPRA's final military strategy, the 'Turning Point.' A detailed discussion of the 'Turning Point' follows later in this chapter.

Though ZIPRA had re-organized and planned operations, the release of political leaders in 1974 disrupted the plans for the war. The external leadership had to listen to those who were coming from prison since the leader of the party was among them. Nkomo came out of prison and tried to negotiate with Smith. When negotiations with Smith yielded no fruit, Nkomo became 'irrelevant' within Rhodesia. His internal strategy of seeking a negotiated settlement proved unfruitful. To rejuvenate his political influence, he went to Zambia and took over the leadership of the exiled wing of the party.⁴⁵¹ A new command structure for ZIPRA was set up in 1976. Political leaders took over military command. The political leadership overshadowed Moyo, Silundika, Ndlovu, and Mangena. Moyo and Mangena, among others, had played significant roles in reconstructing ZAPU's armed wing after the second internal crisis. Their removal from key military positions saw the disappearance of the plan for ZAPU to launch a full-scale guerrilla war, a strategy that Nkomo had never supported. The political leadership that took over favored a conventional war instead. The armed struggle was in full swing

⁴⁵⁰ Ngwabi Bhebe The ZAPU and ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, p. 102.

⁴⁵¹ Interview with Mr. Pathisa Nyathi, Academic, Bulawayo.

by 1977 and ZAPU seemed determined to go for a Soviet 'coup' type revolution aimed at inflicting a military defeat on the Rhodesian army.⁴⁵²

Sabotage and landmine warfare by ZIPRA forced Rhodesian security forces off their posts along the Zambezi River. This made it easier for ZIPRA cadres to cross the Zambezi River and then move across uninhabited lands without having to fight. A report by the ZAPU political commissar in Hurungwe, northwest of Rhodesia, said: "The enemy was very much affected, especially by mine warfare. They could not move by trucks. They had also to move on foot, and when they moved on foot (like us), it was easier for us... People were giving us information on the movements of the enemy." Another report said, "We cut the enemy's supplies by ambushing supply trucks and mining roads. By so doing, we were starving enemy soldiers. As a result, they had to retreat, going to bigger camps and tarred roads." Enemy retreat allowed ZIPRA to penetrate into rural areas. From 1977 to 1978, ZIPRA infiltrated about two thousand guerrillas.⁴⁵³ The map below, which is taken from Ellert's book, highlights ZIPRA incursions from 1977-1978.⁴⁵⁴ By this time, there was infiltration through Lake Kariba. The acquisition of speedboats from East Germany by ZAPU in 1978 enabled the cadres to cross the lake within a short time. Rhodesian security forces had to patrol the lake and the one hundred and fifty miles of lakeshore. This stretching of government security forces depressed the government. The army too was feeling the impact of the war.⁴⁵⁵ A large portion of the country was experiencing guerrilla activities from ZIPRA and ZANLA.

⁴⁵² Jimmy Z Moyo, 'The Development of the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army,' pp. 8-11.

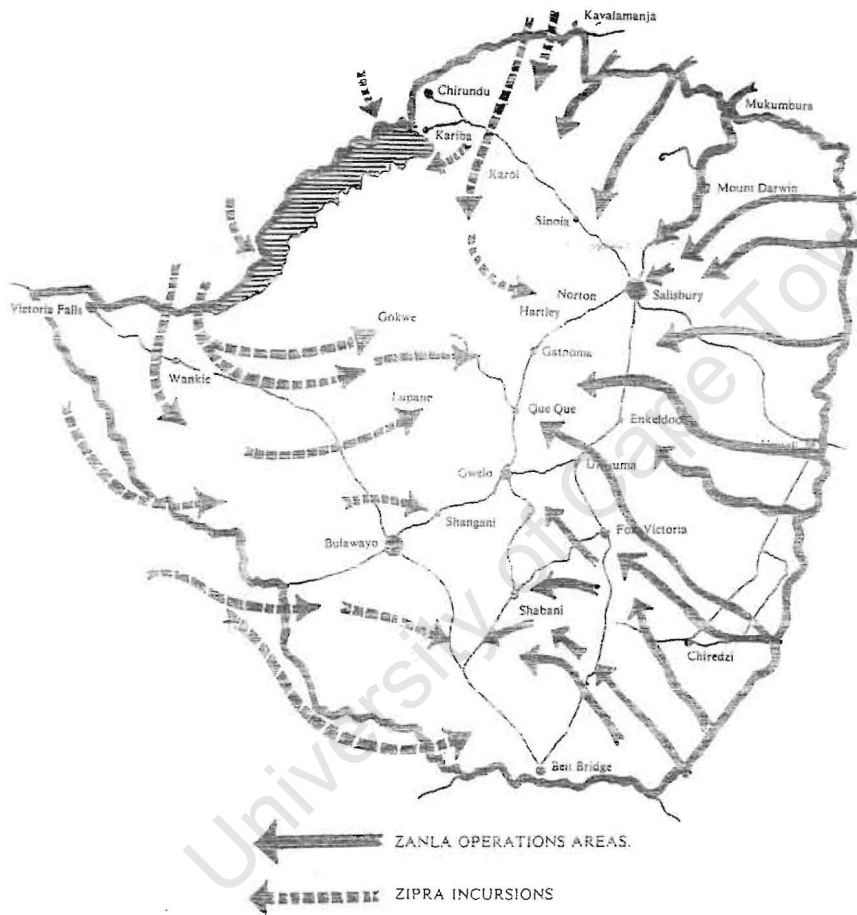
⁴⁵³ Jeremy Brickhill 'Daring to Storm the Heavens: The Military Strategy of ZAPU, 1976-1979' in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger (eds.) *Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁵⁴ Henrick Ellert *The Rhodesian Front War Counter-insurgency and Guerrilla Warfare 1962-1980*, p 49.

⁴⁵⁵ Thomas Arbuckle 'Rhodesian Bush War Strategies and Tactics: an assessment' National Archives: Harare, p. 31.

1977-78

OP Hurricane	Mashonaland	— north east
OP Thrasher	Manicaland	— eastern
OP Repulse	Fort Victoria	— south east
OP Tangent	Matabeleland	— western
OP Grapple	Midlands	— central
OP Splinter	Lake Kariba	— lake area



As the struggle approached its climax, ZIPRA cadres increased their involvement. ZIPRA was responding to the intensification of the struggle and also trying to counter ZANLA's infiltration of large groups. ZIPRA's main contribution to the armed struggle was the launching of significant acts of sabotage rather than the number of attacks launched or the number of cadres deployed. On 3 September 1978, ZIPRA cadres shot down an Air Rhodesia Viscount using a Russian Sam 7 ground-to-air missile, acquired from the Soviet Union. Thirty-eight white civilians were killed by one blow. Ten survivors were also killed as ZIPRA cadres combed the wreckage. This attack produced perhaps the greatest shock as yet experienced by the white community. Never before in the armed struggle in Rhodesia had whites been killed in such large numbers.⁴⁵⁶

Nkomo argued that the Viscounts were being targeted because the Rhodesian government was using them to ferry weapons. Viscounts had been used to carry weapons and paratroopers when ZANU bases in Chimoio were attacked in 1978.⁴⁵⁷ The Rhodesian government responded to this attack by bombing ZAPU's Freedom Camp, north of Lusaka. According to Nkomo, young men who were refugees lived at Freedom Camp. About three hundred and fifty lives were lost in the raid.⁴⁵⁸ On December 11 1978, ZAPU forces blasted a fuel depot in Salisbury's southwestern industrial area. Between forty five to fifty five percent of the country's fuel reserves went up in flames. Nearby firms were also damaged by the huge flames while other firms were forced to

⁴⁵⁶ Mordechai Tamarkin *The Making of Zimbabwe* p. 229.

⁴⁵⁷ Joshua Nkomo *The Story of My Life*, pp. 166-167.

⁴⁵⁸ *ibid.* p. 167.

shut down as firemen battled to put the fire off.⁴⁵⁹ Again, ZIPRA cadres were showing the effectiveness of their urban offensive.

Even though ZIPRA did not deploy many cadres in Salisbury, the few that went in made an impact that caught international attention, showing the qualitative nature of ZIPRA's offensives. The country suffered greatly from fuel shortages because of this attack. The significance of this attack has resulted in some claims by ZANLA that its cadres were responsible for the attack.⁴⁶⁰ Others, not wanting to acknowledge ZIPRA's contribution opt to say that it is not clear who launched the attack. ZAPU's publication, 'The Zimbabwe Review' acknowledged ZAPU's responsibility, so did Dabengwa, Swazini Ndlovu, and Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, in separate interviews. ZAPU had taken the war into the backyard of the white community again.

On 17 February 1979, ZIPRA cadres brought down another Air Rhodesia Viscount, killing fifty-nine whites.⁴⁶¹ Just as the Rhodesian Air Force was killing ordinary ZAPU supporters in raids, ZIPRA was eager to physically attack the white civilian community. While ZIPRA was criticized by the Rhodesian government for attacking a civilian plane, Dabengwa pointed out that ZIPRA intelligence reports had picked up the fact that the commander of the Rhodesian forces, General Peter Walls, was going to be on that flight coming from Kariba. Walls had gone to Kariba that morning with his wife and they were supposed to fly back to Salisbury on the said flight. According to Dabengwa, the presence of Walls on the flight made it a military target. Unfortunately for ZIPRA, Walls' wife insisted that they go fishing in the afternoon and

⁴⁵⁹ 'The Zimbabwe Review' 'ZAPU Forces Destroy Regime's Fuel Depot,' October –December 1978, volume 7, p. 4.

⁴⁶⁰ Mordechai Tamarkin *The Making of Zimbabwe* p. 228.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid. pp.-229-230.

consequently missed their return flight to Salisbury. When the plane was brought down, ZIPRA cadres believed that Walls was on the plane.⁴⁶²

The shooting down of the two planes and the attack on fuel reserves left the white community in Rhodesia very frightened. Wherever they were, Rhodesians began to feel insecure, realizing that the war could not be allowed to drag on because the guerrillas were proving not to be just a band of 'terrorists' operating in rural areas. The rising number of white soldiers being killed resulted in the formation of the War Widows Association in June 1976. Gloom crept into the white community that had previously not felt the pinch of the war.⁴⁶³ A white woman in 1976 said 'Things seem to be getting worse, and the awful thing about it is that we do not appear to be achieving the military breakthrough that we all want.'⁴⁶⁴ The movement of white people in the country became restricted because of the security situation. Skilled white male labour was removed from the market and taken to the war. This led to a gradual deterioration of the economy. About 14 000 whites emigrated from Rhodesia in 1976 because of the war.⁴⁶⁵ The rise of defense expenditure also took a toll on the economy. In 1975, the Rhodesian government spent Rh \$ 77 million on defense. In 1976, the figure had gone up to Rh \$ 96 million, then up to Rh \$ 146 million in 1977. Forty percent of the country's budget in 1978 was assigned to defense.⁴⁶⁶ Ian Smith tried to keep the morale of the white community high by claiming that an internal settlement with Muzorewa would end the war. He claimed that morale was high among the soldiers though he admitted that there were some circles

⁴⁶² Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo. Dabengwa said that Walls told him that he missed the flight because his wife insisted on spending some time fishing.

⁴⁶³ Mordechai Tamarkin *The Making of Zimbabwe*, p. 121.

⁴⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁶⁵ *ibid.* pp. 121-122.

⁴⁶⁶ Annette Seegers 'Revolution in Africa: The Case of Zimbabwe (1965-1980)' (PhD Dissertation: Loyola University,) 1983, p. 329.

of the white community that were complaining that the pain from the war.⁴⁶⁷ The new intensity of the struggle contributed to the gradual shift of the Rhodesian government's position and eventually led to the negotiated settlement at Lancaster House.

'The Turning Point:'

Even though ZIPRA did not deploy its full military force in terms of manpower and equipment before ceasefire, 'The Turning Point' distinguished ZIPRA as a unique liberation army, capable of fighting a war against a conventional army.⁴⁶⁸ 'The Turning Point' was ZIPRA's final military strategy that was inspired by Vietnamese theories that guerrilla warfare was only a preparatory stage, after which higher forms of warfare in which military victories were expected had to be activated. The renowned Vietnamese theorist and practitioner, General Vo Nguyen Giap said: "To keep itself in life and develop, guerrilla warfare has necessarily to develop into a mobile warfare. This is a general law... If guerrilla warfare did not move to mobile warfare, not only the strategic task of annihilating the enemy manpower could not be carried out, but even guerrilla activities could not be maintained and extended."⁴⁶⁹

ZIPRA's High Command drew up plans for 'The Turning Point' in 1978. The idea behind it was that semi-liberated zones would be cleared of the enemy and established as rear bases. Regular forces would be introduced to defend these liberated zones. Meanwhile, using larger and heavier equipment, ZIPRA cadres would launch attacks on the Rhodesians in their areas of defense. Guerrilla warfare would continue to

⁴⁶⁷ Rhodesia Ministry of Information 'Prime Minister's Address To The Nation,' January 24, 1977.

⁴⁶⁸ J. Alexander, J. McGregor & T. Ranger, Violence and Memory, One Hundred Years in The 'Dark Forests' of Matebeleland, p. 141.

⁴⁶⁹ Jeremy Brickhill 'Daring to Storm the Heavens: The Military Strategy of ZAPU 1976-1979' in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger (eds.) Soldiers in Zimbabwe's Liberation War, p. 52.

be used while mobile forces achieved military victories.⁴⁷⁰ ZIPRA had aircraft based in Angola. Pilots were being trained in the Soviet Union so that ZIPRA's Air Force would give cadres on the ground air cover as 'The Turning Point' was being launched.⁴⁷¹ Semi-liberated zones had been established by ZIPRA in Hurungwe, Sipolilo, Gokwe, Lupane, and Tsholotsho. These would be key launching points for 'The Turning Point.'⁴⁷² This 'Turning Point' was distorted during the Lancaster House talks and in the post independence period by people who said that it was ZAPU's plot to seize power from ZANU by military force, in the post independence period.⁴⁷³

ZIPRA had also drawn up the 'Zero Hour Plan' in 1978. The idea behind this strategy was the launching of coordinated offensives on several fronts. Bridgeheads in the northern front in Kanyemba, Chirundu and Kariba were to be seized by ZAPU. These places would provide crossing areas for ZIPRA cadres and artillery. Airfields at Kariba, Victoria Falls and Wankie would also be attacked and seized so that ZIPRA Air force would shift from Angola to Rhodesia. The 'Zero Hour Plan' was meant to compliment the launching of 'The Turning Point.'⁴⁷⁴

In October 1979, the Rhodesian Special Air Service and Light Infantry engaged in a battle with ZIPRA. The Rhodesian ground force failed to break ZIPRA's fire, marking a victory for ZIPRA as the Rhodesians were forced to retreat. 'The Turning Point' had been planned to be launched around October-November 1979 but a delay in the return of trainee pilots from the Soviet Union delayed the launch. ZAPU's War Council decided

⁴⁷⁰ *ibid.* p. 56.

⁴⁷¹ According to Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Director of ZAPU's Information and Publicity Department. Jeremy Brickhill's 'Daring to Storm the Heavens: The Military Strategy of ZAPU 1976-1979' pp. 62-64, also acknowledges the fact that ZIPRA was preparing an Air Force.

⁴⁷² Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

⁴⁷³ Jeremy Brickhill 'Daring to Storm the Heavens: The Military Strategy of ZAPU 1976-1979' in N. Bhebe and T. Ranger (eds.) *Soldiers in Zimbabwe*, p. 59.

⁴⁷⁴ *ibid.* pp. 61-64.

to wait until air cover was available. Meanwhile, talks at Lancaster House progressed and a ceasefire agreement was drawn up. ZIPRA thus lost the opportunity to display its might in battle through executing 'The Turning Point.'⁴⁷⁵

At the end of the war, ZIPRA had about twenty thousand fighters, mostly recruited and trained from 1976-1978.⁴⁷⁶ However, most of these fighters were outside the country by the time the war ended. This can be used as evidence of the fact that ZIPRA did not really engage in the armed struggle. One could also argue that since ZAPU's major military campaign after the second internal crisis was going to be the execution of 'The Turning Point,' its failure to take off meant that ZAPU and ZIPRA did not really engage in the struggle after 1972. This is perhaps pushing the assessment too far. Respect must be paid to ZAPU's strategy, which was informed by past experiences. ZAPU deliberately decided that strategic attacks not quantity were the way forward. Consequently, instead of infiltrating large groups of cadres, the few that came in were tasked with launching significant attacks on the enemy. The Rhodesian intelligence had picked up wind of the possibility of the launching of 'The Turning Point' while the Lancaster House Conference was in session.⁴⁷⁷ Uncertainty over the effectiveness of the impending attack and the insecurity that had been instilled in the minds of the white community by the shooting down of the Viscounts and the rocket attack on the fuel depot, must have put pressure on the Rhodesian delegates at Lancaster House. Though ZANU committed more manpower to the struggle because of the strategy it was using,

⁴⁷⁵ *ibid.* pp. 62-64.

⁴⁷⁶ *ibid.* p. 66.

⁴⁷⁷ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, Director of ZAPU's Information and Publicity Department, Bulawayo.

ZAPU's military contribution to the struggle for independence was essential, especially in stretching the enemy's defense positions.⁴⁷⁸

Nkomo's talks with Smith:

Following the collapse of the Victoria Falls Bridge Conference in 1975, Nkomo remained within Rhodesia, pursuing a strategy which he had always believed in, talks with the enemy, with the hope of achieving a peaceful transition.⁴⁷⁹ Mugabe and Tekere left the country to seek more direct involvement in the armed struggle. The manner in which Nkomo engaged in talks with Smith was sometimes very dangerous to the cause for the liberation of African people. In these talks, Nkomo occasionally compromised his position as leader of an African nationalist party by indicating that he was willing to give whites assurances that their interests would remain secure. The idea behind the armed struggle was to challenge the privileges the white community had set for itself, privileges which Nkomo seemed willing to uphold. Nkomo went into talks with the support of the leaders of the revived internal ZAPU, but he did not bother to consult the external wing of the party that was coordinating the armed struggle, thereby causing a contradiction of strategy in the party.⁴⁸⁰

Unlike Mugabe, Nkomo did not believe that the armed struggle was the only way forward in the struggle for independence. However, Nkomo miscalculated the commitment of the Rhodesian government to the liberation of Africans. Coming out of prison after the ANC had been allowed to voice its opinion to the Pearce Commission, and the background of the holding of the Victoria Falls Bridge Conference may have

⁴⁷⁸ Interview with Mrs. Mary Ndlovu, member of ZAPU, Bulawayo.

⁴⁷⁹ Joshua Nkomo *The Story of My Life*, p. 156.

⁴⁸⁰ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

created the impression on Nkomo's mind that Rhodesians were now willing to talk.⁴⁸¹

With time, Nkomo discovered that Smith was not yet ready for talks.

Nkomo and others, locally and regionally remained convinced that a peaceful settlement was possible despite the collapse of the Victoria Falls Bridge Conference. The South African government was eager to assist in drawing up a peaceful settlement in Rhodesia as a way of blocking the influence of the Soviet Union. Zambia's gradual economic deterioration, partly because of the war in Rhodesia, made Kaunda willing to participate in seeking a peaceful settlement in Rhodesia.⁴⁸² Regional influence on Nkomo and Smith formed the background of the talks between the two. The South African government brought Smith to the talks, while Kaunda influenced Nkomo. The South African government wanted to ensure a settlement with an acceptable nationalist leader acceptable to the white community and also claiming credibility among the black population. Nkomo was the suitable candidate for such a settlement.⁴⁸³ He was moderate enough not to pose a threat to the interests of the white community, and as the leader of ZAPU, he commanded a following among the African population.

In going into the talks, the Rhodesians believed that they could reach a settlement with Nkomo that did not amount to majority rule. Nkomo took a gamble to negotiate because he was convinced that negotiations would lead to majority rule. He wanted to inherit the colonial state and then gradually Africanize it. Nkomo was also aware that ZANU had the upper hand on the battlefield because of the infiltration of large groups of

⁴⁸¹ Cindy L. Courville 'The Zimbabwe Nationalist Movements: Strategy For Liberation,' p. 116.

⁴⁸² Mordechai Tamarkin The Making of Zimbabwe pp. 78-81.

⁴⁸³ *ibid.* p. 86.

cadres from Mozambique. A peaceful settlement would thus pre-empt ZANU's achievement on the battlefield and see ZAPU assume power.⁴⁸⁴

Nkomo began talks with Smith in 1975. While Nkomo was aware that African nationalists were demanding one man one vote, the case for which ZIPRA cadres were fighting, in its proposals to the Rhodesian government, the ANC (Z) suggested that it was willing to calm the fears of the Rhodesian Front by compromising to accept a three tier electoral system. This system would result in the establishment of a National Assembly with one hundred and forty four seats. Thirty-six 'A' seats would be elected by universal adult suffrage, while seventy two 'B' seats would be elected by qualified suffrage. Minimum educational qualification to vote for the 'B' role seats was set at two years of secondary education. Thirty-six seats for the 'C' roll would be elected on the basis of a very highly qualified suffrage.⁴⁸⁵

Rather than promote independence, the three tier electoral system would have meant that all Africans voted for thirty-six 'A' roll seats only. Power would have essentially remained in the hands of the white community, giving it power to elect three quarters of the members of the National Assembly. The original ANC, which had expelled Nkomo, denounced his talks with Smith, pointing out that they did not represent the interests of the majority.⁴⁸⁶

Nkomo was not able to see the game the Rhodesian Front was playing because of his own interest in power and because he believed that the Rhodesians were genuine. He

⁴⁸⁴ Mordechai Tamarkin *The Making of Zimbabwe* pp. 86-88.

⁴⁸⁵ African National Council (Z), 'Smith-Nkomo Talks. The ANC's Proposals on the major points of principle which must be agreed before detailed committee work can begin.' Salisbury, 17 March 1976, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro (eds.) *Zimbabwe Independence Movements, Select Documents*, p. 389.

⁴⁸⁶ African National Council, 'Speech by Dr. Gordon Chavhunduka, Secretary General,' 7 February 1976, *ibid.* p. 382.

promised Smith “ZAPU would safeguard political and economic rights for the Europeans,” and guarantee the security of the private sector. On 1 December 1975, Nkomo and Smith agreed to call for a constitutional conference but by 19 March 1976, the Nkomo-Smith deal had fallen apart because of Smith’s unwillingness to gradually give power to blacks over a period of ten to fifteen years.⁴⁸⁷

The transitional period of ten to fifteen years Nkomo intended would have meant a longer period of suffering for the African population in Rhodesia. Nkomo had opted for such a long transitional period as a way of calming the fears of the white population, but in so doing he was slowing down the cause for the liberation of the Africans in Rhodesia. Explaining the failure of his talks with Smith, Nkomo’s ANC (Z) pointed out that the Rhodesian Front’s refusal to grant immediate majority rule to Africans had shown that the Rhodesian Front still wanted to hold on to power.⁴⁸⁸ Smith refused to grant majority rule to blacks, announcing at the breakdown of the talks that there would be no majority rule in Rhodesia in a thousand years to come.⁴⁸⁹ Nkomo failed to see that from the time that he started engaging Smith in talks, there was no intention to give blacks power. Smith was just buying time to perpetuate white minority rule and cause division among the African nationalists. Smith and Nkomo met for fourteen times and there were very clear signs that Nkomo would compromise, as shown by his willingness to accept a three tier electoral system and a ten to fifteen year transitional period. It is interesting that Nkomo should be the one to compromise while Smith remained hard on

⁴⁸⁷ Henrick Ellert The Rhodesian Front War Counter-insurgency and Guerrilla Warfare, p. 39.

⁴⁸⁸ African National Council (Z) ‘Statement on the issues after the breakdown of the Smith-Nkomo talks,’ 19 March 1976, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro (eds.) Zimbabwe Independence Movements, p. 396.

⁴⁸⁹ David Martin and Phyllis Johnson The Struggle For Zimbabwe, p. 228.

his principles. As leader of a nationalist movement, Nkomo should have been the one pushing for demands rather than easily compromising.⁴⁹⁰

Reference has already been made to the impact of Nkomo's talks with Smith on ZIPA. The talks also strained relations between Nkomo and Moyo who was keen on fighting rather than seeking a peaceful transition.⁴⁹¹ Though unintended Nkomo's talks with Smith revealed Smith's true colours and contributed to the intensification of the armed struggle. Smith's declaration that he did not believe in black majority rule was a clear message to the nationalists that the barrel of the gun was their only hope. One can argue that having been embarrassed by the failure of his talks with Smith, Nkomo became more committed to the armed struggle as he relocated to Lusaka. ZIPRA's 'Turning Point' and 'The Zero Hour Plan' were drafted in the aftermath of the failure of Nkomo's talks with Smith, indicating ZIPRA's plans for intensive attacks on the enemy.

Old habits die hard. In August 1978, Nkomo engaged in secret talks with Smith again. The involvement of the British and American governments in initiating the talks made Nkomo respond positively. The British and the Americans favored an internal settlement as a way of blocking the influence of the Soviet Union on Rhodesian nationalists. Nkomo hoped that Mugabe would subsequently participate in the talks. Mugabe refused to participate, and the shooting down of an Air Rhodesia Viscount in September 1978 closed the Nkomo option as Nkomo fell out of favor with Rhodesians because his cadres were killing whites.⁴⁹²

Smith wanted to establish an internal settlement with Nkomo as a way of ending the war. By appealing to Nkomo again in 1978, Smith was showing that even though

⁴⁹⁰ Martin Meredith *The Past is Another Country Rhodesia UDI to Zimbabwe*, p. 211.

⁴⁹¹ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

⁴⁹² Mordechai Tamarkin *The Making of Zimbabwe*, pp. 239-240.

their first attempt at talks had been an embarrassment to Nkomo, the nationalist was not yet a spent force. Nkomo's participation in the PF and his command over an armed wing made him an indispensable figure in the settlement of the Rhodesian crisis. Having learnt from his past mistakes, Nkomo was not going to ignore ZANU in an attempt to reach a settlement with Smith.⁴⁹³ The talks collapsed again without achieving anything significant in the struggle. Instead, when Mugabe discovered that Nkomo was having secret talks with Smith, mistrust deepened between them.⁴⁹⁴

A consistent approach to the struggle would have made Nkomo's contribution to ZAPU's participation in the struggle and indeed to the cause of the liberation of Africans in Rhodesia positive on the whole. Without belittling the sacrifice Nkomo made in the struggle for liberation, one must acknowledge that his engagements with Smith by himself and in secret were detrimental to ZAPU's war effort. While Nkomo was engaged in talks with Smith, ZIPRA could not launch massive offensives on the Rhodesian government. ZIPRA played a significant role on the battlefield but perhaps not as much as it would have had Nkomo not engaged in talks with Smith immediately after his release from detention. Nkomo's attempt at talks came at the wrong time: the impact of the armed struggle and international pressure had not yet put significant pressure on the Rhodesian government. Consequently, the talks came to nothing.

The Patriotic Front (PF):

What the other attempts at collaboration between ZAPU and ZANU, in various forms, failed to achieve, the Patriotic Front (PF,) complimented by the impact of the war and international and regional pressure, managed to achieve. The essence of the struggle

⁴⁹³ Ken Flower *Serving Secretly Rhodesia's CIO Chief On Record*, p. 209.

⁴⁹⁴ Andre Astrow *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?* pp. 132-133.

in Rhodesia had been to seek the granting of independence and majority rule to Africans. ZAPU and ZANU sought to dislodge the Rhodesian government from power through various means and up to 1979, had not succeeded. Under the auspices of the PF, African nationalists from ZAPU and ZANU negotiated the settlement that saw the granting of independence to Zimbabwe.

The PF was set up on 9 October 1976, due to pressure from the OAU. The failure of ZIPA saw the OAU pushing for a united front on a political level among African nationalists in Rhodesia.⁴⁹⁵ The desire to unite African nationalists lay in the fact that the OAU and the Frontline States were aware of the impact of a divided approach to the struggle. A divided opposition would weaken the position of the nationalists. Nkomo's attempt to reach a negotiated settlement with Smith had failed on 19 March 1976 and so there was need to reunite African nationalists. A conference at Geneva was coming up, following the presentation of the Kissinger Plan. It was going to be essential for African nationalists to speak with one voice at the Geneva Conference to avoid weird compromises such as the ones Nkomo had proved liable to make.⁴⁹⁶

The PF was in essence an alliance between ZAPU and ZANU, uniting the parties in negotiating with the enemy. The primary objective of the PF was the liquidation of colonialism, imperialism and minority rule. Democratic structures would be set up across the country by the PF, ensuring the existence of a socially just environment in the country. The promotion of peace, stability, and security were among its objectives.⁴⁹⁷ The rejection of the internal settlement, which Smith was seeking to establish with

⁴⁹⁵ Henrick Ellert *The Rhodesian Front War Counter-insurgency and Guerrilla Warfare*, p. 39.

⁴⁹⁶ *ibid.* p. 40.

⁴⁹⁷ 'The Patriotic Front' 16 January 1977, Maputo. Document at National Archives, Harare, Acc. MS 589/12, p. 1.

Muzorewa, was a shared vision between members of the PF and the Frontline States.

They were against Smith's attempt to co-opt some black leaders into a government that kept power in the hands of the white minority.⁴⁹⁸

Ten men were appointed to coordinate ZAPU and ZANU affairs in the PF. Nkomo and Mugabe became joint leaders of the PF. While it was clear that collaboration on a political level was necessary, military unity, given the experiences of ZIPA, remained a challenge. Deep differences separated the armed wings of the two parties. ZIPRA was still angry at the shooting of some of its cadres at Mgagao by ZANLA in 1976. The PF thus remained a platform of convenience with neither party willing to settle for unity on the basis of equality. The unity formed under the PF was on the political front whereby Nkomo and Mugabe as co-leaders would speak with one voice. Party ideologies remained a barrier against complete unity. Mugabe's concept of unity within the PF was for ZAPU to join ZANU while Nkomo was afraid of complete unity because of his thin ethnic base. Nkomo feared that complete unity would result in him being swallowed up by the Shona majority in ZANU. Instead of complete unity, Nkomo was comfortable with a loose alliance that allowed him room to occasionally flex his muscles as the leader of ZAPU.⁴⁹⁹ Zvobgo pointed out that since the armies of the two nationalist organizations were operating in different areas, joint operations were not necessary. This was despite the fact that ZANU was keen to keep the political parties

⁴⁹⁸ Interview with George Silundika, Deputy Publicity Secretary, ZAPU PF, in *The Zimbabwe Review* Volume 7, 2 March 1978, p. 22.

⁴⁹⁹ Mordechai Tamarkin *The Making of Zimbabwe*, p. 174.

separate while launching combined military operations. ZAPU wanted to establish political unity before joint military operations were taken up.⁵⁰⁰

The armed struggle continued as the main strategy in the PF's struggle for independence. Strikes, sabotage, and diplomatic talks were still embraced as complimentary engagements to the armed struggle.⁵⁰¹ It was in the interest of the PF to ensure that the two parties agreed on strategy. Again, this was building on the lesson learnt from the failure of ZIPA where differences in the manner of executing the war had brought serious division among the cadres. With the PF, each party was expected to continue engaging in the armed struggle, using tactics that it was comfortable with. ZANLA could thus freely continue engaging in guerrilla warfare, while ZIPRA made preparations for launching a conventional warfare.⁵⁰²

Circumstances surrounding the formation of the PF create two possible ways of understanding it. According to Sithole, in one respect, it was and had to be 'a marriage of convenience.' Though Nkomo and Mugabe did not like each other, the political situation they faced caused them to unite against a common enemy. Nkomo was just recovering from the impact of the failure of his talks with Smith, while Mugabe, just coming out of 'political hostage' in Mozambique,⁵⁰³ was beginning to gain influence and control over ZANU and ZANLA. The two inevitably needed each other since the Frontline States had expressed their support for a united African nationalist approach to the upcoming Geneva

⁵⁰⁰ Interview with Eddison Zvobgo, 'You either support the Patriotic front or you support the enemy,' in Liberation Support Movement (eds.) *Zimbabwe: The Final Advance*, p. 35.

⁵⁰¹ ZAPU, 'The Patriotic Front' p. 1.

⁵⁰² Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

⁵⁰³ Sithole argues that when Mugabe and Tekere arrived in Mozambique in 1974, they were detained by FRELIMO. There is evidence to the contrary. Fr. Fidelis Mukonori, in an interview, July 2002, stated that when Mugabe arrived in Mozambique, he familiarized himself with cadres he met in camps and he engaged in a massive recruitment exercise. Initially though, Mugabe's movements in Mozambique were restricted.

Conference.⁵⁰⁴ Mugabe and Nkomo were also aware that they had to find a way of pre-empting attempts by Muzorewa, Ndabaningi Sithole, and other black leaders who had begun negotiating with Smith in an attempt to set up an internal settlement.

On the other hand, Sithole argues that the PF could be considered as 'a marriage of patriots' if one argued that Nkomo and Mugabe had genuine interests in the liberation of Zimbabwe, going beyond personal ambitions for power. As such, the establishment of the PF would have just been a natural development in the struggle.⁵⁰⁵ It goes without saying that a competition for power was at the heart of the struggle among African nationalists. The reason other attempts at collaboration had not worked was because of the competition for power which haunted African nationalists. Nkomo looked forward to taking over from Smith just as Mugabe did. It is perhaps fair to conclude that the PF was actually 'a marriage of convenience' since it created the platform that enabled ZAPU and ZANU to present a united political front when dealing with the enemy, regardless of the differences and tensions that existed between the two parties.

On 20 August 1979, the PF accepted an invitation to the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference. At the Commonwealth Heads of States meeting in Lusaka in August 1979, Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, was asked by the heads of states to take responsibility for the granting of independence to Rhodesia. An independent government for Zimbabwe was to be elected through free and fair elections supervised by the British government and by members of the Commonwealth.⁵⁰⁶ Muzorewa and Sithole had thought that by entering into an internal settlement with

⁵⁰⁴ Masipula Sithole *Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle*, pp. 166-168.

⁵⁰⁵ *ibid.* p. 168.

⁵⁰⁶ Shepherd Nzombe 'Negotiations with the British,' in Canaan Banana (ed.) *Turmoil and Tenacity*, p. 181.

Smith, the war would come to an end. However, Smith and the rest of the white community realized that the internal settlement was not going to produce the anticipated results.⁵⁰⁷ The call by the Commonwealth Heads of States for free and fair elections in Rhodesia implied a rejection of the Smith-Muzorewa internal settlement.

Stedman argued that at the Lusaka meeting, the British appeared as if they were undecided about the future of Rhodesia because they wanted all the suggestions to come from the gathered Heads of States. Frontline leaders, especially Kaunda and Machel were feeling the pinch of the war and thus put pressure on the PF to settle for an agreement that ended the war. Frontline states threatened to withdraw their support if the PF caused the failure of the conference.⁵⁰⁸

ZAPU and ZANU went to the conference and represented the interests of the majority Africans with one voice. Each party had its own delegation but the position of the PF was presented with one voice. Nkomo, given a chance for talks again, was determined to ensure the success of the conference, especially now that he was negotiating with ZANU on his side. Given the temperamental nature of the ZANU delegation and constant threats by Mugabe to walk out of the conference, Nkomo became a stabilizing factor within the PF at the Lancaster House talks.⁵⁰⁹

A bone of contention between Nkomo and Mugabe at Lancaster House was the suspicion that ZIPRA was preparing a military force that would seize power from ZANU after independence. The mobilization and preparation for 'The Turning Point' and 'Zero Hour Plan' had seen massive mobilization and training by ZIPRA. Distortion of facts by the CIO and an attempt to split the PF saw the generation of the false impression that

⁵⁰⁷ Stephen J. Stedman *Peace Making in Civil War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.) 1988, p. 188.

⁵⁰⁸ *ibid.* pp. 169-172.

⁵⁰⁹ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

ZAPU was preparing for an onslaught against ZANU. Rhodesian security forces were trying by all means to find a way of weakening African opposition before and during the Lancaster House Conference. Consequently, creating hostility between ZAPU and ZANU was adopted as a strategy.⁵¹⁰ Fortunately, the alliance lasted long enough to cover the period of the conference and the PF sustained a united presentation.

At the Lancaster House Conference, the PF did not just accept all the points that were put forward by the British government. Making a clear shift from the compromises that Nkomo had promised Smith, the PF insisted that the new constitution had to embrace universal suffrage, majority rule, and the granting of independence to Zimbabwe. With these reasons for fighting removed, a ceasefire agreement could then be drawn up.⁵¹¹ The PF did not want a constitution that granted automatic citizenship to people who had taken up Rhodesian citizenship between the period of UDI and the granting of independence since this would imply incorporating mercenaries who had come to Rhodesia specifically to support the oppressive government. The idea of dual citizenship proposed by Britain was rejected by the PF.⁵¹²

The PF found the provision on the right to property and arrangements over land acquisition on a willing buyer-willing seller basis impossible to accept. The land question had been used during the war as the main tool for mobilizing the masses yet the proposed constitution was going to make it difficult for the government to redistribute land. Mugabe and other hardliners threatened to walk out of the conference because of this issue but Tongogara reminded him that Machel would close ZANLA bases in

⁵¹⁰ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

⁵¹¹ David Martin and Phyllis Johnson *The Struggle For Zimbabwe*, p. 319.

⁵¹² 'Patriotic Front Response to British Constitutional Proposals For Zimbabwe,' in Mariyawanda Nzuwah (ed.) 'Journal of Southern African Affairs' (University of Maryland: Southern African Research Association,) Volume 4, number 4, 1979, p. 490.

Mozambique, while Nkomo expressed an unwillingness to walk out. The PF eventually gave in to the constitution after an ambiguous offer by America of assistance in financing land redistribution.⁵¹³ When Mugabe threatened to walk out again because of unsatisfactory ceasefire arrangements, pressure from Machel and Nkomo's stability brought him back to the conference.⁵¹⁴

Some critics have accused the PF of compromising by accepting the Lancaster House constitution. Astrow argued that the compromises accepted by the PF at Lancaster House benefited the white community. External pressure to end the war saw the PF accepting a constitution that set out a willing buyer willing seller arrangement over land redistribution. The government would never afford to buy land from white commercial farmers under such an arrangement.⁵¹⁵ However, it is important to acknowledge that for once, since the establishment of the ANC to respond to the Anglo-Rhodesian constitutional proposals, the political leaders of ZAPU and ZANU managed to get together and represent the concerns of African people with one voice under very difficult conditions in which the radical demands of Mugabe and Nkomo's moderate approach had to complement each other. It was through the negotiations at Lancaster House that the constitution for an independent Zimbabwe was drawn up. Pressure from the battlefield and the concerns of international and regional leaders also added to the pressure on the Rhodesian government and the PF. The Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government set up by Smith and Muzorewa collapsed with the conclusion of the Lancaster House talks.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹³ Stephen J. Stedman *Peace Making in Civil War*, p. 182.

⁵¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 201.

⁵¹⁵ Andre Astrow *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost its Way?* p. 155.

⁵¹⁶ Interview with Mr. Welshman Mabhena, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

As a ceasefire was declared, ZIPRA cadres who had been preparing to launch 'The Turning Point' and the 'Zero Hour Plan,' were forced to submit to a deal signed by their political leaders. Even though the militants within ZAPU would have preferred military victory, the leadership of Nkomo carried the day. As co-leader of the PF, Nkomo participated in negotiations that brought independence to Zimbabwe. Nkomo had hoped that ZAPU and ZANU would contest the first elections as one, under the banner of the PF. If the PF was a marriage of patriots, contesting the elections as PF would have been a natural development. But since the PF was 'a marriage of convenience' to get ZAPU and ZANU to negotiate with the Rhodesian government with one voice, and to challenge the internal settlement set up by Smith and Muzorewa, once the goals of the PF were attained, it became irrelevant. The stage was now set for African nationalist parties to contest the first majority elections in Zimbabwe by competing for power with all the other parties that were in the country.

The pacts and attempts at collaboration during the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe show the way in which African nationalists tried to work together for the liberation of the country. They also indicate the manner in which different people approached the struggle. While some advocated for independence through the barrel of the gun only, there were others who regarded talks as the best strategy. The danger of compromising through talks, the dirty tactics of the Rhodesian Front in dividing African nationalists, and the underlying competition for power that haunted the nationalists made alliances and collaboration essential among African nationalists. It was because of their united approach against the Smith-Muzorewa internal settlement that ZAPU and ZANU

managed to exert sufficient pressure that Smith's attempt to pretend to give blacks in Zimbabwe power collapsed.

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Chapter Six:

Conclusion:

This study has highlighted the part played by ZAPU and ZIPRA in the struggle for the independence of Zimbabwe. In 1980, ZANU won the first democratic elections. Victory in the elections has been used by some people as a measure of the significance of the party's participation in the struggle for independence. While ZANU's invaluable commitment to the struggle for independence is undoubted, such an assessment of the struggle fails to acknowledge ZAPU's contribution. Election results should not be used as the only way of measuring the participation of nationalists in the struggle. This chapter concludes the discussion by evaluating some aspects of ZAPU's participation in the struggle. The roles played by both ZAPU and ZANU were essential in bringing about the collapse of the internal settlement set up by Smith and Muzorewa, thereby paving the way for the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference at which a negotiated settlement was reached by the warring parties.⁵¹⁷

ZAPU was the first African nationalist party in Rhodesia to give prominence to the name Zimbabwe, by taking the name Zimbabwe African People's Union. Zimbabwe was the name that the oppressed Africans in Rhodesia regarded as the legitimate name of the country. The party chose a name that appealed to the quest of the oppressed Africans to set up their own independent nation called Zimbabwe.⁵¹⁸ The naming of ZAPU also contributed to cementing unity among African people, as the party commanded a national following at the time it was founded. '*Mwana wevhu*' (son/daughter of the soil) was the manner in which members of ZAPU addressed each other, overlooking anything that was

⁵¹⁷ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

⁵¹⁸ Wellington Nyangoni African Nationalism in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), p. 50.

bound to divide them.⁵¹⁹ In ZAPU, the African population found a national body that united them in pressing for their liberation. Political activity among the Africans was no longer limited to urban areas only. ZAPU spread African political consciousness to rural areas, thereby upsetting the control government appointed Native Commissioners had over the rural population. Native Commissioners were part of the oppression of the Rhodesian government, appointed to maintain control over the rural population.⁵²⁰

ZAPU must be given credit for being the first nationalist party in Rhodesia that mobilized and radicalized the concerns of the African people in Rhodesia. The parties that existed before ZAPU laid the foundation upon which ZAPU was able to coordinate a national campaign against the Rhodesian government. The founding leaders of ZAPU were able to articulate the concerns of the African population in a manner that coherently represented the concerns of the Africans in the country. Notions of imperialism and Pan-Africanism were embraced in the rhetoric of the nationalists, thereby uniting the political aspirations of the Africans in Rhodesia with the general wave of liberation rhetoric that was prevalent on the continent at the time.⁵²¹

ZAPU provided the training ground for the nationalists, most of whom still hold leadership positions in the country. They were members of ZAPU when it was formed and their political careers began to take shape within ZAPU. Mugabe was ZAPU's first Publicity Secretary; Joseph Msika, the current second Vice President, was a member of ZAPU to the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987.⁵²² ZANU came into being in 1963 because the attempt to depose Nkomo from the leadership of ZAPU failed. The vision

⁵¹⁹ Interview with Mr. Welshman Mabhena, ZAPU founding member, Bulawayo.

⁵²⁰ Interview with Mr. James Chikerema, ZAPU founding member, Harare.

⁵²¹ Wellington Nyangoni *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)*, p. 50.

⁵²² Interview with Mrs. Mary Ndlovu, ZAPU member, Bulawayo.

which Sithole and others shared in moving away from ZAPU to form their own party was generated by their active participation in Rhodesian politics as members of ZAPU.

ZAPU conscientized the minds of these nationalists and helped them understand the dynamics of the political situation they were facing. This understanding enabled them to identify what was lacking in ZAPU's strategy, a radical commitment to the armed struggle. ZANU thus emerged to fill the gaps that had been identified in ZAPU's strategy. Despite the inter-party clashes that were witnessed throughout the struggle, ZANU was formed to complement the task which African nationalists had taken upon themselves at the time ZAPU was formed, to struggle for the independence of the African population. Nkomo was clear what ZAPU's task was. Presenting a statement on ZAPU's approach to the struggle, Nkomo said, "We do not think in terms of violence. Our basic duty lies in urging the British government in every way we can to carry out her inherent responsibilities to the people of our country by granting majority rule as she has done to the rest of her former colonies." This non-radical approach became characteristic of ZAPU's strategy in the struggle.⁵²³ The goal was clear: like ZANU, ZAPU struggled for independence.

Nkomo put the case for the independence of Africans in Rhodesia on an international platform. Through presentations to the United Nations in 1962, Nkomo managed to get seventeen nations to vote in favour of a resolution on granting independence to Rhodesia.⁵²⁴ Given the limited resources available to Africans in Rhodesia, international recognition of the legitimacy of the struggle for independence made it possible for various countries within Africa and beyond the continent to support

⁵²³ Wellington Nyangoni *African Nationalism in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)*, p.120.

⁵²⁴ C.C Ngcebetsa (ed.) *The African Home News*, August 4, 1962, Volume 9, p. 3.

nationalist movements from Rhodesia. While the Rhodesian government referred to nationalist cadres as 'terrorists,' international recognition for the struggle ZAPU was about meant that in the eyes of the nations that chose to support the cause for the liberation of Zimbabwe, nationalist cadres were liberation fighters.

From the time ZIPRA was formed in 1972 to the drawing up of 'The Turning Point,' in 1978, ZIPRA was clearly building up an armed force that was made up of highly trained cadres. The professional training ZIPRA cadres were exposed to enabled them to launch effective attacks on the enemy without committing large numbers of manpower. In the attacks on the fuel tanks in Salisbury and the shooting down of the two Viscounts, ZIPRA displayed the might of its military power by taking the war into the backyard of the white community. ZIPRA displayed a high level of planning by launching attacks that were bound to affect a wide range of the white community. Sabotaging fuel reserves dealt a huge blow to the Rhodesian economy and shooting down the Viscounts enabled ZIPRA to kill a large number of whites without committing many men to battle.⁵²⁵ The heat-seeking missiles, which were used to bring down the Viscounts, showed the extent to which ZIPRA cadres had been equipped to launch conventional attacks beyond the limitations of most guerrilla movements. Whereas the bulk of the white community had generally remained safe and far removed from the line of fire, the might of ZIPRA weapons must have instilled fear in the urban white community, which came to realize that it was not beyond the reach of ZIPRA attacks.⁵²⁶

Though hostile to each other since the 1963 split, the awareness that a common enemy was being fought against made it possible for ZAPU and ZANU to respond to

⁵²⁵ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

⁵²⁶ Mordechai Tamarkin *The Making of Zimbabwe*, p. 121.

efforts by Frontline states to set up a united African opposition to the Rhodesian government. At various times during the struggle, alliances were drawn up that resulted in efforts to establish collaboration between the two parties. The setting up of the ANC in 1972 is of special significance here. Going beyond immediate party interests, the African population was mobilized in such a manner that it resoundingly rejected the Anglo-Rhodesian constitution. The Pearce Commission heard loud and clear in 1972 that Africans were not going to accept a constitution that had been drawn up without the involvement of their nationalist leaders.⁵²⁷ Attempts to establish the JMC, ZIPA and the eventual setting up of the PF were all motivated by the recognition of the roles ZAPU and ZANU were playing in the struggle. A united opposition would thus strengthen them. However, since the motivation to unite the two parties was not always rooted in the goodwill of their respective leaders, ambitions for power and differences of strategy made collaboration difficult at times. Like ZANU, ZAPU intended to set up the first independent government in Zimbabwe. Consequently, selfish ambitions from both sides blocked some efforts at collaboration.

Despite the great courage displayed by some ZIPRA cadres and the show of ZIPRA's military strength, there are elements of ZIPRA's strategy that will continue to haunt ZAPU's contribution to the struggle, aspects of strategy that indicate that ZAPU did not commit itself fully to the armed struggle. By 1979, ninety five percent of Rhodesia was under martial law, a sign that the impact of nationalist cadres from ZANU and ZAPU was being felt as the government was failing to control the country

⁵²⁷ ANC 'Why ANC Says 'NO' To The Settlement Proposals' Statement to The Pearce Commission in Salisbury, 3 January 1972, in Nyangoni and Nyandoro (eds.) Zimbabwe Independence Movements Select Documents, pp. 210-211.

effectively⁵²⁸; but the two parties committed hugely unequal numbers of cadres to the battlefield.

At the time of the Lancaster House Conference, the situation was as follows:⁵²⁹

	ZIPRA	ZANLA
Cadres deployed internally	4 055	10 275
Trained cadres in external bases	16 000	3 500
Cadres in training (external bases)	2 950	14 000
Totals	23 005	27 775

The statistics indicate that ZIPRA deployed less than half the number of cadres deployed by ZANLA. It is evident that by 1979, the bulk of trained ZIPRA cadres were in external bases, not fighting. The 16 000 cadres ZIPRA had in external bases was higher than the number of cadres ZANLA deployed. It is also evident that the number of cadres ZANLA still had in training was higher than that of ZIPRA cadres. As a result, ZANLA emerged as the larger of the two armies.

The 4 055 cadres deployed by ZIPRA certainly contributed to the fighting on the battlefield but there was no way that they were going to match the impact of the 10 275 cadres deployed by ZANLA. The high number of cadres deployed by ZANLA enabled ZANU to spread its influence among the African population much wider than ZAPU. The numerical advantage ZANLA had over ZIPRA makes it plausible to accept the claim that ZANLA did most of the fighting that resulted in the failure of the Rhodesian government to exert effective control over the country. ZIPRA did not make use of its full military potential since the bulk of its trained cadres were in exile by the time the war

⁵²⁸ Henrick Ellert *The Rhodesia Front War, Counter-Insurgency and Guerrilla Warfare 1962-1980*, p. 51.

⁵²⁹ Ken Flower *Serving Secretly, Rhodesia's CIO Chief On Record*, p. 248.

ended. 'The Turning Point,' ZIPRA's glorified military strategy, was never implemented. While credit must be given to the detailed planning that went into drawing up 'The Turning Point,' and the pressure it exerted on the government since Rhodesian forces were aware of the plan, ZIPRA did not benefit on the battlefield because the plan was never executed. The liberated zones envisioned by 'The Turning Point' remained ideas on paper.

When analyzing statistics of cadre deployment into Rhodesia by nationalist forces, one must take cognizance of the difference of geographical terrain faced by the two parties. ZIPRA cadres had the challenge of conquering the harsh Zambezi River while ZANLA cadres had the advantage of a generally friendlier terrain. Nature made it possible for ZANLA to infiltrate large numbers of cadres at a time from Mozambique, a thing that was not possible for ZIPRA. Inevitably, ZIPRA found deployment of cadres from Zambia difficult.⁵³⁰

Why did ZIPRA keep the bulk of its forces outside the country? Given that by 1979, ZIPRA had a total of 20 055 trained cadres while ZANLA had about 13 775 cadres, why did ZANLA deploy a higher number of cadres to the battlefield? The answer perhaps lies in Nkomo's conviction that reason would prevail, allowing for the drawing up of a peaceful settlement to the Rhodesian struggle. This approach greatly affected the manner in which ZIPRA cadres were deployed.⁵³¹ Responding to regional pressure from South Africa and persuasion from Kaunda, Nkomo engaged in secret talks with Smith. From 1976, ZAPU lacked a consistent approach to the struggle. As Nkomo went into talks with Smith, ZIPRA's effort on the battlefield was pulled back.

⁵³⁰ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

⁵³¹ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

This study has highlighted one of the problems that haunted the military campaigns of ZIPA from the very beginning. There was lack of trust among cadres, a lack of trust rooted in the difference of approach by the leaders of the two parties. ZANLA cadres found it difficult to fight alongside ZIPRA cadres while Nkomo was seeking a peaceful transition of power. While radicals in ZIPRA like Moyo were keen to launch a full-scale armed struggle, they found it difficult to go into battle while the leader of their party was talking to the enemy. The manner in which Nkomo went into talks with the Rhodesian government paralyzed ZAPU's war efforts. At a time when it was essential to launch massive military offensives, following the failure of the Victoria Falls Bridge Conference, Nkomo miscalculated Smith's attitude and agreed to go into talks. As the talks failed, Smith proclaimed boldly that he had no intention of giving blacks majority rule.⁵³²

Though Nkomo's intention was noble as he went into talks, his miscalculation of Smith's commitment to the liberation of Africans and his willingness to accept a three tier electoral system contradicted the radical nationalist demands that were being aired from 1975. It was proposed that a National Assembly with one hundred and forty four seats would be established. Thirty-six 'A' seats would be elected by universal adult suffrage while the qualifications for voting for 'B' and 'C' seats were too high for most Africans.⁵³³ This electoral system was designed to safeguard power in the hands of the white minority since blacks were being offered a system that excluded them from electing the majority of the members of the National Assembly. Under this arrangement,

⁵³² David Martin and Phyllis Johnson *The Struggle For Zimbabwe*, p. 228.

⁵³³ African National Council (Z) 'Smith-Nkomo Talks. The ANC's Proposals on the major points of principle which must be agreed on before detailed committee work can begin.' In Nyangoni and Nyandoro (eds.) *Zimbabwe Independence Movements Select Documents*, p. 389.

the white community would have control over three quarters of the members of the National Assembly. For a peaceful transition of power, Nkomo was willing to offer the white community a number of assurances as a way of persuading them to relinquish power. Playing the game of persuading the Rhodesian government clearly contradicted the whole notion behind the armed struggle. It became clear that the war was being fought as a way of winning power from the white community. Nkomo was hoping to talk Smith into giving him power at a time when Smith was least interested in relinquishing power. One can accuse Nkomo of failing to read the dynamics of the immediate political situation.

Nkomo's unwillingness to commit ZAPU radically to the armed struggle was presented as one of the reasons behind the split in 1963. While members of ZAPU and Nkomo deny this accusation by arguing that ZAPU put a lot of effort to the war, the events on the ground do not always tally with their argument. While ZIPRA was in the process of planning for the implementation of 'The Turning Point' in 1978, Nkomo was engaging in another series of secret talks with Smith.⁵³⁴ Nkomo probably noticed that Smith was trying to split the PF, so he insisted that Mugabe should be part of the talks. Smith's idea was to get Nkomo to establish an internal settlement with him. While these talks were underway, ZIPRA cadres shot down the second Viscount, causing much fear and anger among the white community. The underlying contradiction in Nkomo's strategy is seen here. While he was negotiating a peaceful settlement, his cadres were shooting down a passenger plane. Nkomo immediately fell out of favour with Smith and their talks collapsed.⁵³⁵

⁵³⁴ Andre Astrow *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?* pp. 132-133.

⁵³⁵ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

ZANLA's war effort on the eastern front benefited immensely from the complimentary effort of ZIPRA on the southwestern front, especially after the opening of infiltration routes through Botswana from 1975. ZAPU's participation in the armed struggle contributed to the splitting up of the enemy's defense. The Rhodesian government could not concentrate all its efforts on dealing with ZANLA infiltration from the eastern front. There was need to guard against ZIPRA infiltration across the Zambezi River as well.⁵³⁶ The shooting down of the second Viscount just before the Lancaster House Conference sent a clear message to the white Rhodesian government that the war was beginning to have a direct and painful impact on the white urban community.

ZANU and ZAPU together engaged the Rhodesia government in a war that had a huge negative impact on the economy. In 1978, the government was forced to devalue the Rhodesian dollar twice within a period of six months, a clear sign that the economy was deteriorating because of the war. There was a standstill of investments and share markets, coupled by an increase in taxation. The government, as a way of raising funds to finance the war, introduced a ten percent corporate tax. ZIPRA attacks on the Elephant Hills Hotel in 1977 ground tourism in Victoria Falls to a halt. Tourism, a major source of foreign currency for the country, was shut down. The shooting down of the Viscounts also scared potential tourists away. Industrial production slowed down, with tea production in Chipinge, in the eastern highlands, coming to a complete halt because of the war.⁵³⁷

No one won the war in Rhodesia. Ultimately, a negotiated settlement at Lancaster House paved the way for the first majority elections. The presence of ZAPU at the

⁵³⁶ Thomas Arbuckle 'Rhodesian Bush War Strategies and Tactics: An Assessment' Document held at the National Archives, Harare, GEN-P/ARB, Acc. 34011, p. 31.

⁵³⁷ 'The Zimbabwe Review', volume 7, 5 June 1978, p. 24.

Lancaster House Conference and the role played by Nkomo as co-leader of the PF in arguing together with Mugabe and also in stabilizing Mugabe when he threatened to walk out, are signs that while ZAPU did not commit as much manpower to the battlefield as ZANU, ZAPU's own limited contribution cannot be ignored. Regardless of the numbers of cadres committed to the battlefield, ZAPU and ZANU sat at Lancaster House as equal members of the PF. As a member of the PF, ZAPU played a role in determining the future of Zimbabwe by accepting the ceasefire arrangements that saw the end of the war. The talks that Nkomo had always believed in won the day.⁵³⁸ ZAPU played an indispensable part in ensuring the collapse of the Smith-Muzorewa internal settlement. The failure of the internal settlement to get recognition foiled Smith's attempt to cheat Africans into a settlement.⁵³⁹ Thanks to ZAPU and ZANU's collaboration and international pressure, the Rhodesian government was gradually weakened. Though ZAPU was haunted by strategic contradictions at times, its contribution to the liberation of Zimbabwe should not be downplayed.

⁵³⁸ Interview with Mr. Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, ZAPU's Director of Information and Publicity, Bulawayo.

⁵³⁹ Interview with Mr. Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA's chief of intelligence, Bulawayo.

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